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ABSTRACT

The report examines the services provided to handicapped students at the Minnesota School for the Deaf and the Minnesota Braille and Sight Saving School. The evaluation focused on three critical concerns: adjustments to meet changing demands for service, efficient and effective operation, and the advisability of continuing to provide residential schools for hearing impaired and visually impaired students. Section I reviews the history, organization, and budget of both schools, while sections II and III analyze the schools separately in terms of issues and trends in the field; admission, placement, and exit procedures; academics; and potential future roles. The report makes recommendations throughout the text, including the need to develop written criteria for admission and to increase cooperation between residential schools and local school districts. Suggestions consider use of the Braille School for multihandicapped students and changing program and philosophies at the School for the Deaf. (CL)

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EVALUATION OF THE MINNESOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE MINNESOTA BRAILLE AND SIGHT-SAVING SCHOOL

January 4, 1984

OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION
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PREFACE

In May 1983, the Legislature and the Legislative Audit Commission directed the Program Evaluation Division to study the Minnesota School for the Deaf and the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School. Legislators and others wanted to know how the schools have responded to changes in education of the handicapped and whether the state should continue to provide residential schools for hearing impaired and visually impaired students.

These and other questions we examined are complex, and we have not always been able to provide conclusive answers. However, we think this report will help decision makers in the Legislature and the Department of Education in their efforts to shape the current and future operation of the residential schools. We also recognize that there are other perspectives and interests to be considered. While we have tried to offer a constructive evaluation, we know there are other voices to be heard.

We have concluded that the residential schools have not made changes in their program and mission that are necessary to better serve students who need the schools. We also think the state should carefully reexamine the need to provide residential programs for blind students and the appropriateness of operating a program for multi-handicapped students in the new building that has been constructed on the Braille School campus.

We were assisted in our study by the full cooperation of the administration and staff of the state residential schools. They are dedicated to providing a high-quality educational program for their students. We have also benefited from the assistance of staff of the state Department of Education and special educators in many Minnesota school districts.

This report was written by Allan Baumgarten (project manager) and Deborah Fine, with assistance from Jack Benjamin and Audrey Swartz.

James R. Nobles
Legislative Auditor

PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

The Program Evaluation Division is part of the Office of the Legislative Auditor. The division's general responsibility, as set forth in statute, is to determine the degree to which activities and programs entered into or funded by the state are accomplishing their goals and objectives and utilizing resources efficiently. A list of the division's studies appears at the end of this report.

Topics for study are approved by the Legislative Audit Commission (LAC), but the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in Program Evaluation Division reports are solely the responsibility of the Legislative Auditor and division staff and are not necessarily the position of the LAC or any of its members. Upon completion, reports are sent to the LAC for review and are distributed to other interested legislators and legislative staff.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 1800s, hearing impaired and visually impaired youngsters had few opportunities for formal education. Many states established residential schools to educate those children. The Minnesota School for the Deaf and the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School were opened in Faribault in the 1860s and have provided adapted educational and residential programs for more than 100 years. Although the two schools are now under one administration, it is important to understand how different they are in program, staff, and facilities.

Enrollment at the Minnesota School for the Deaf peaked at 335 students in the 1930s and has since declined to 173. The Braille School enrolled 134 students in 1936, but only 50 students in 1983. Local school district programs now serve 90 percent of hearing impaired and visually impaired students in Minnesota; only about 10 percent attend the residential schools. The demand for a residential school for students who have only one sensory handicap has decreased. At the same time, the residential schools have been called on to serve more students who have significant additional handicaps.

In our evaluation of the state residential schools, we asked:

- How well have the two schools adjusted to meet changing demands for service?
- Are the schools' programs operated efficiently and effectively?
- Should Minnesota continue to provide residential schools for hearing impaired and visually impaired students?

A. BUDGET AND STAFF

The Minnesota School for the Deaf and the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School have a combined staff complement of 223 employees and a 1984-85 biennial budget of nearly $12 million. Residential programs are expensive:

- We estimate that the annual cost per student in 1983 was $20,700 at the School for the Deaf and $35,000 at the Braille School.

The higher per-student cost at the Braille School is partly due to lower student/teacher ratios required to meet the needs of the many multi-handicapped students enrolled there.

In 1975, administration of the two schools was consolidated under one superintendent. Support departments, including health, residential services, plant management, food, and accounting serve

PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

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January 4, 1983

REPORT ON THE STATE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IN FARIBAULT

The Legislative Auditor's Program Evaluation Division has released a report on the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School and the Minnesota School for the Deaf. The report recommends that the residential schools make changes in their program and mission to better serve their students. The Legislative Auditor also recommends that the state formally phase out the residential program for students who are blind but not otherwise handicapped and re-examine the future need for a program serving multi-handicapped students in the recently constructed building on the Braille School campus.

The two schools are located on separate campuses in Faribault. Enrollment peaked at about 470 students during the 1930s, but has since dropped to 223. The annual cost per student in 1983 was about $20,700 at the School for the Deaf and $35,000 at the Braille School.

About ten percent of the hearing impaired and visually handicapped students in Minnesota attend the residential schools. The rest are served in programs offered through local school districts and special education cooperatives. In recent years, the residential schools have been called on to serve more students with significant additional handicaps besides blindness or deafness. At the Braille School, 39 of the 50 students are in ungraded programs for multi-handicapped students.

The Program Evaluation Division report concludes that the residential schools still need to improve their ability to meet the special educational needs of handicapped students in several areas, including: providing teachers with additional training and experience in working with other handicaps, providing clinical therapists and support staff to work with students with serious behavior problems and other needs, and establishing clear criteria for admission to the schools and for measuring progress toward educational goals. Furthermore, the schools, particularly the School for the Deaf, need to expand their use of the Faribault district schools in order to increase the educational options available to students and to provide new opportunities for interaction with non-handicapped children.

The state has just completed construction of a $4.6 million dollar classroom and dormitory building on the Braille School campus with capacity for 75 students. However, the traditional kindergarten through twelfth grade program at the Braille School has only eleven students this year, eight of whom will be graduated in the next three years. Since new placements are rare, the report recommends that the state discontinue the program within three years. The report also suggests that enrollment at the school in three years may be too low to justify a program for multi-handicapped students and raises several educational concerns about using the new building for that purpose. The report points out that the state will have to seek a suitable long-term use for the building.

Copies of the report are available from the Program Evaluation Division. For additional information, contact Allan Baumgarten (612/296-6440).

both campuses jointly. The residential schools have two assistant superintendents, four school principals, a dean of residential programs, and a five-person business staff. Since 1976, the schools have been under the authority of the state Board of Education and the Department of Education.

B. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The Minnesota School for the Deaf and the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School provide Level 6 special education programs to visually impaired, hearing impaired, and multi-handicapped students. Level 6 service means an educational program that takes place at a residential facility. The School for the Deaf provides a traditional, kindergarten through twelfth grade program which is adapted to meet the special communication needs of hearing impaired students. It also offers a full program of intramural and varsity sports, and other extra-curricular activities.

The Braille School has changed its mission in recent years. The traditional graded program for visually impaired students now serves only eleven students, of whom nine take about one-half of their classes in the Faribault district schools. The other 39 students at the Braille School are served in one of the four ungraded programs for blind, blind/multi-handicapped, deaf/multi-handicapped, and deaf-blind students.

We identified several problems in the education programs of the two residential schools. In almost all cases, our concerns apply to both schools.

1. INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION

An essential element of education of handicapped children is fashioning an educational program that meets the student's individual needs. To that end, state Department of Education rules require that an Individualized Education Program be prepared for every handicapped student. The program is to be based on periodic assessments of the student's needs and is developed by parents and all members of the educational team serving those needs.

We examined how well the residential schools are meeting the individual educational needs of their students in three areas: use of the individualized program; identification and consideration of additional handicaps; and the availability of special therapies and support services.

a. Individualized Programs

We reviewed the student files and individualized programs of 25 twelfth graders at the School for the Deaf. We found that all individualized programs look the same. The goals and performance measures for each course were always the same for every student

enrolled in that course and did not reflect any consideration of individual background, skills, or needs. While the student files at the Braille School were better, the individualized programs also lacked measurable goals for individual students.

b. Serving Children With Additional Handicaps

The School for the Deaf has no written criteria for diagnosing additional handicaps such as learning disabilities or behavioral problems. However, it has labelled more than 40 percent of its students as having additional handicaps. We think the school does a poor job of assessing students' handicaps. We also think that the school is not providing a program that meets the individual educational needs of those students who actually have significant additional handicaps.

All teachers at the School for the Deaf are licensed in education of the hearing impaired as well as in elementary education or secondary subjects. However, no teachers have additional licenses in education of the learning disabled, mentally retarded, or emotionally disturbed.

While one-half of the Braille School teachers are licensed in more than one handicap area, we questioned some of their assignments. For example, there are three classes for deaf-blind children. Only one is taught by a teacher trained in that area. In another case, the Braille School uses teacher aides to teach orientation and mobility skills to blind students. These aides are not formally trained in teaching orientation and mobility. Although licensure does not guarantee competence, it is important that teachers at the residential schools who work with multi-handicapped students have additional training and experience in the special needs of those students.

Neither school is adequately equipped to deal with students with serious behavior problems. The school psychologist at the School for the Deaf has only limited experience in behavior management techniques. We confirmed five cases in which students with behavior problems had been placed at the School for the Deaf, but the school could not deal with the behavior problems any better than the local district or the student's family. The students returned to their local districts after a few months.

2. ADMISSIONS AND EXIT

The residential schools draw most of their students from school districts in Regions 9, 10, and 11: the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, southeastern Minnesota and south-central Minnesota. About 42 percent of the students at the School for the Deaf are from the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, and 30 percent are from Regions 9 and 10. At the Braille School, two-thirds of the students come from Regions 9, 10, and 11.

It is widely assumed that because the incidence of hearing impairment and vision impairment is so low, it is impossible for small school districts in sparsely populated areas to provide adequate services for so few affected students. However, only a small portion

of the students at the School for the Deaf come from school districts where there are very few hearing impaired students or where the local district does not offer programs for hearing impaired students. Many placements are at the parents' initiative. In general, placement is not made because the School for the Deaf provides a superior academic program. Instead, students are sent there so they can attend school in a congenial atmosphere, where hearing impairment and sign language are the norm.

The admissions procedure for the residential schools is described in detail in administrative rules. The procedure places burdens on local districts and on the residential schools to make decisions to admit or not on the basis of thorough assessment data and the student's performance. Decisions are to be based on careful reviews of individual student's needs and the capacity of the local district and the residential schools to meet each of those needs.

In our review, we found the actual admissions process to be much more informal than that described in rule. In the student files that we reviewed at both schools, the decision of a local district to refer a student and the decision of the residential schools to admit that student were usually poorly documented. Furthermore, the residential schools do not critically review the application. No student has formally been denied admission to the School for the Deaf. With rare exceptions, the Braille School accepts all applicants.

Once students are placed at the School for the Deaf or the Braille School, the schools are required to conduct periodic reviews of whether the goals and objectives established for that student are still appropriate and the extent to which they are being achieved. The schools are also required to conduct a formal reassessment of the student's needs every two years. In making the decision to admit and in the periodic reassessments, the residential schools are expected to fully answer the question: does placement in a residential school continue to meet the student's needs in the least restrictive environment?

We found little evidence that reviews and reassessments are conducted in any useful way. The annual reviews invariably reached the conclusion that the student's program was still appropriate and that no changes were needed. One role of the biennial assessment is to form the basis for a recommendation that the student return to his home school district. However, we found no case at the School for the Deaf of reassessment and subsequent transfer. Neither the School for the Deaf nor the Braille School have criteria for deciding what a student should achieve in order to return to the home school district.

3. MAINSTREAMING

We examined the extent to which students at the residential schools are exposed to programs and classes in the Faribault school district. In our view, efforts to partially mainstream these students are important because of the educational options that are made available and because of the opportunities to interact with non-handicapped peers.

The Braille School has sent many of its students to the Faribault district schools for a large portion of their school day for many years. This year, nine of the eleven students in the graded program took part of their program in mainstream classes. However, we found that the Braille School does not work closely with the Faribault district schools and does not provide adequate support to teachers who have blind students in their classes.

We found the attitude of the School for the Deaf toward mainstreaming to be ambivalent at best. As recently as 1979, no students from the School for the Deaf attended classes in the district schools. Even this year, only ten students are enrolled for part of their program in the district schools.

Administrators at the School for the Deaf do not establish mainstreaming as an educational goal for students, nor do they actively encourage it. When a student does attend classes in the district schools, it is usually at the student's or parent's initiative. As with the Braille School, we found that the School for the Deaf does not provide adequate support to help its students succeed in mainstream classes.

4. ACADEMIC PROGRESS AT THE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Because of delays in language development, hearing impaired students often have deficiencies in basic vocabulary and reading skills. It is not unusual for them to perform several years below their grade level on standardized achievement tests. We found this to be true with students at the School for the Deaf. By comparing achievement test scores of students at the School for the Deaf and students at a day program in St. Paul, we also found no evidence that the School for the Deaf does a better job of addressing the serious challenges of educating hearing impaired students.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the problems we found in the educational programs of the two residential schools, we offer a series of recommendations in this report. They include:

- developing written criteria for admission;
- involving an outside agency in admission and periodic assessment decisions;
- improving procedures for diagnosing handicaps and strengthening the capability of the schools' programs for students who have additional handicaps;
- increasing the extent to which School for the Deaf students take classes in Faribault district schools and improving the support services needed for successful mainstreaming; and
- increasing cooperation and sharing of expertise between the residential schools and local school districts, and clearly establishing the role of the residential schools in a statewide continuum of services for handicapped students.

C. NEED FOR THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

1. MINNESOTA BRAILLE AND SIGHT-SAVING SCHOOL

In March 1984, a new classroom and dormitory building with capacity for 75 students will be completed on the Braille School campus. This $4.6 million building represents many years of studies and discussions of how to meet the space and program needs of the Braille School. In 1979, the Legislature decided to authorize construction of a new facility on the Braille School campus rather than consolidating the two schools on the School for the Deaf campus.

It is sometimes useful to view the Braille School as two schools. The first is the traditional kindergarten through twelfth grade program for students who are blind but not otherwise handicapped. However, because of the small number of students in the graded program and the disparity in their ages, it has been virtually impossible to bring students together in traditional classes. The second school is comprised of four ungraded programs for students who are multi-handicapped.

In the 1983-84 school year, eight of the eleven secondary students in the traditional program are in grades ten, eleven, and twelve. The three elementary students were placed there until their local school district can hire a new teacher. Thus, if no new students are placed in the traditional program, it will be empty in three years.

We believe that the state no longer needs to operate a residential school for single-handicapped, blind students. Therefore, we recommend:

- The graded program for single-handicapped, blind students should be formally phased out during the next three years.

This transition period will allow ample time for the high school students to graduate. With appropriate support services, blind students can be served in local district programs. Where local programs are inadequate, the state could designate certain districts as regional centers and arrange foster home placements in conjunction with the educational program. The state must continue to ensure that blind students have access to services, but it no longer needs to be a service provider.

If the Braille School's traditional program is phased out, that would leave its ungraded programs for multi-handicapped students. Three-fourths of the students in those programs are age 16 or older and will leave the school in the next three years. We are aware of a handful of students who might be placed in the multi-handicapped programs after the move into the new building. However, we think it is unlikely that there will be more than 25 students in the school after 1986.

Besides low enrollment, we think there are several educational concerns that should be considered in examining the future role of the Braille School and use for the new building. First, we are concerned that students in the multi-handicapped programs are likely to be segregated from their non-handicapped peers and from their handicapped peers on the School for the Deaf campus. Second, the new facility houses instructional and residential programs under one roof, which some educators view as contrary to the goal of establishing a normal environment. Finally, if the state wants to provide a central program for multi-handicapped children, that program should have convenient access to the specialized support services that it will need. We are also concerned that the program will be extremely costly to operate, given the low enrollment and number of specialized teachers and other staff that will be required.

The state has made a major investment in building a new facility on the Braille School campus. We expect that it will be needed to house a program for multi-handicapped students for three years. During that time, however, we think the state should carefully examine the long-range need for the program, alternate uses of the campus, and how students needing such a specialized program can best be served.

2. THE MINNESOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

After several years of steady decline, enrollment at the School for the Deaf has reached a plateau of 170 to 180 students in the past five years. The school has graduated large senior classes in that time. There are 37 seniors this year. In 1979, 42 students were graduated from the School for the Deaf. These large classes reflect the movement of a large cohort of deaf students who were born during the 1960s. At this group completes high school, we expect the enrollment at the School for the Deaf to reach a new plateau in 1985 of 130 to 150 students. Although the number of new placements has increased in recent years, that figure is exceeded by the number of graduating seniors.

We have concluded that the state should continue to offer the residential school option as part of a full continuum of educational programs for hearing impaired students. We also think that the School for the Deaf needs to make changes in its program and philosophy in order to take its place in a statewide system of services for hearing impaired students.

The cumulative effect of implementing the recommendations in this report would be a somewhat different Minnesota School for the Deaf. Clear admission criteria would mean that fewer students would be enrolled. More emphasis on measurable goals and objectives would shorten the average stay of students at the school. The school would have the necessary support services to meet the educational needs of students with additional significant handicaps besides hearing impairment. Districts in southern Minnesota would expand their services to hearing impaired students and would rely less on the School for the Deaf.

INTRODUCTION

The Minnesota School for the Deaf and the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School have educated hearing impaired and visually impaired youngsters for more than 100 years. At their campuses in Faribault, these schools have provided residential services and educational programs that are adapted to meet the special needs of handicapped students.

In its 1983 session, the Legislature requested that the Legislative Auditor evaluate the state residential schools.[1] Legislators and others wanted to know if the schools' programs were operated efficiently and effectively and if the state should continue to provide residential schools for hearing impaired and visually impaired students.

The Program Evaluation Division has completed a comprehensive evaluation of the state residential schools. During our study, we met with the schools' administrators, teachers, and specialists who provide support services. We also spoke with special education teachers and directors from various parts of Minnesota and with staff members of the state Department of Education.

In our visits to the residential schools, we were impressed by the commitment of the administrators, teachers and other staff members to serving their students. We observed classes on both campuses and saw many dedicated and gifted teachers in action.

Chapter I of this report reviews the history, organization, and finances of the residential schools. Chapter II presents our analysis of the educational program for visually impaired and multi-handicapped students at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School. In Chapter III, we analyze the educational program at the Minnesota School for the Deaf.

Appendix A contains some definitions of deafness and blindness used by state agencies, while Appendix B reprints the Legislature's language requesting this study. Appendix C describes services for hearing impaired, visually impaired, and deaf-blind students in Minnesota school districts and special education cooperatives.

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[1] Laws 1983, Chapter 258, Section 2, Subdivision 3 (g).

I. THE FARIBAULT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS: HISTORY, ORGANIZATION, AND BUDGET

The Minnesota School for the Deaf (MSD) and the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School (MBSSS) are located on separate campuses in Faribault. This chapter describes the history of the two schools, their staff and administration, and how they are funded.

A. RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Minnesota's special education rules describe six levels of service for students requiring special education. As shown in Figure 1, they range from Level 1 in which students attend a regular class without any special services, to Level 6 in which students receive their education in a program at a residential facility for handicapped children.

In Minnesota, three publicly operated schools provide Level 6 service: the Minnesota School for the Deaf and the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School in Faribault, and the Lakeview School for physically handicapped children in Worthington. Level 6 service for emotionally disturbed children is provided by privately operated residential treatment facilities in cooperation with local school districts.

Almost all states operate residential schools for deaf and blind children. The Minnesota School for the Deaf is one of 62 public residential schools for deaf children in 48 states. A combined school for deaf and blind students is operated in twelve states. There are also private residential schools for deaf children in many states. In Minnesota, the W. Roby Allen School has served students for many years in a house located just outside the gates of the Minnesota School for the Deaf. At the present time, there are residential schools for visually impaired students in 43 states. Most residential schools for hearing impaired and visually impaired children were established more than 50 years ago.

B. HISTORY AND ENROLLMENT TRENDS

Establishment of a state school for the deaf was first proposed in 1858, the same year in which Minnesota became a state.[1] Five years later, the Legislature authorized the opening of a school for the deaf in Faribault which would also serve visually impaired students.

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[1]Most of the material in this section is taken from Wesley Lauritsen, History of the Minnesota School of the Deaf, 1963; and One Hundred Years of Sight and Sound, 1966.

FIGURE 1

LEVELS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE IN MINNESOTA

5 MCAR §1.0224 B

1. In level 1 a nonhandicapped pupil is placed in a regular classroom and does not receive special education, or is not enrolled in school. This level includes assessment services, monitoring, observation, and follow-up.

2. In level 2 a pupil is placed in a regular classroom. Instruction and related services are provided indirectly through the regular teacher, teachers, parents, or other persons who have direct contact with the pupil. The consultation and indirect services include ongoing progress review; cooperative planning; demonstration teaching; modification and adaptation of the curriculum, supportive materials, and equipment; and direct contact with the pupil for monitoring, observation, and follow-up.

3. In level 3 a pupil receives direct instruction from a teacher, or related services from a related services staff member for less than one-half of the day. Consultation and indirect services are included.

4. In level 4 a pupil receives direct instruction from a teacher for one-half day to less than full-time. Consultation and indirect services are included.

5. In level 5 a pupil receives full-time direct instruction from a teacher within a district building, day school, or special station or facility. Integrated activities solely for socialization or enrichment, and related services are excluded when determining full-time. Consultation and indirect services are included.

6. In level 6 a pupil is placed in a residential facility and receives direct instruction from a teacher. Consultation and indirect services are included.

The school opened in September 1863, in rented quarters in Faribault.[2] During the first year, eight students enrolled. A separate department for blind students began in 1866 in a rented house. In 1868, both departments moved to the school's first permanent building, on the current Minnescta School for the Deaf campus. Six years later, the department serving blind students became a separate school, and moved into a house less than one mile south of the School for the Deaf campus.[3] The Braille School campus is directly adjacent to the Faribault State Hospital and School for mentally retarded persons. The state hospital was originally established in 1881 as a department of the Faribault residential schools.

Enrollment at the two schools grew steadily and peaked in the 1930s when there were 335 students at the School for the Deaf and 137 students at the Braille School.[4] Figure 2 shows average enrollments in the two schools since the 1860s. During this period of growth, there were few educational opportunities for hearing impaired and visually impaired children in local schools. In 1907 and 1917, the Legislature enacted laws requiring deaf and blind students to attend the Faribault residential schools. The residential schools sent field consultants throughout the state to recruit students.

Enrollments declined since the 1930s to 173 students at MSD and 50 students at MBSSS during the 1983-84 school year. Only about 10 percent of visually impaired and hearing impaired students served by special education programs in Minnesota attend the residential schools.

As shown in Figure 3, the residential schools draw most of their students from school districts in regions 9, 10, and 11: south-central and southeastern Minnesota, and the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. About 42 percent of the students in the School for the Deaf are from the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, and 30 percent are from regions 9 and 10. This includes about a dozen students who live with their families in the Faribault area and attend MSD on a day school basis. At the Braille School, two-thirds of the students come from districts in regions 9, 10, and 11. (About 62 percent of school children in Minnesota live in those three regions.)

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[2]The school was originally known as the Minnesota Institute for the Deaf and Dumb. It has since been renamed the Minnesota Institute for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind (1864), the Minnesota Institute for Defectives (1887), and the Minnesota School for the Deaf (1902).

[3]The school was originally known as the Minnesota School for the Blind. Its name was later changed to the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School (1941).

[4]On the national level, enrollment in residential schools for blind and deaf students peaked around 1900 and has decreased ever since.

FIGURE 2

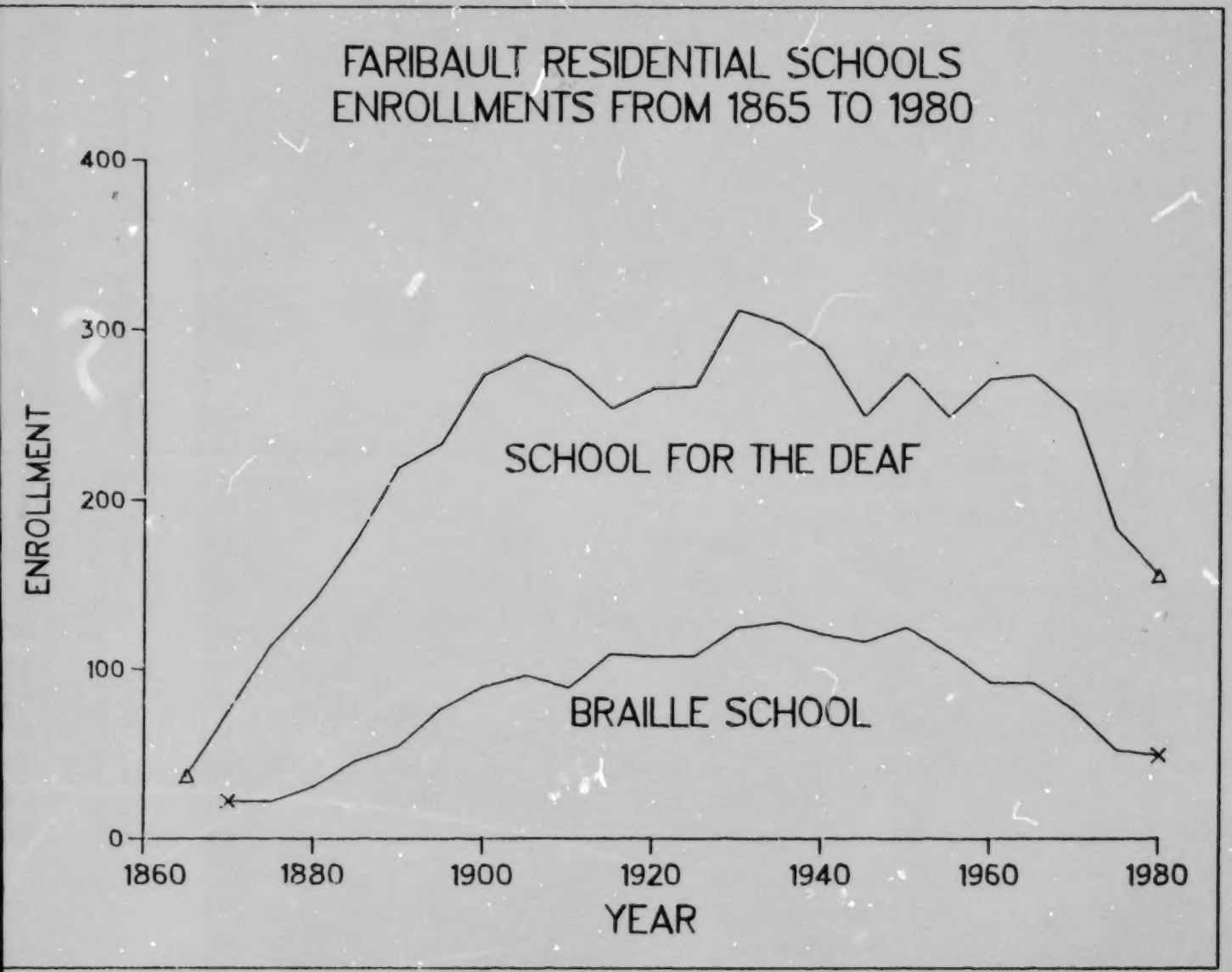
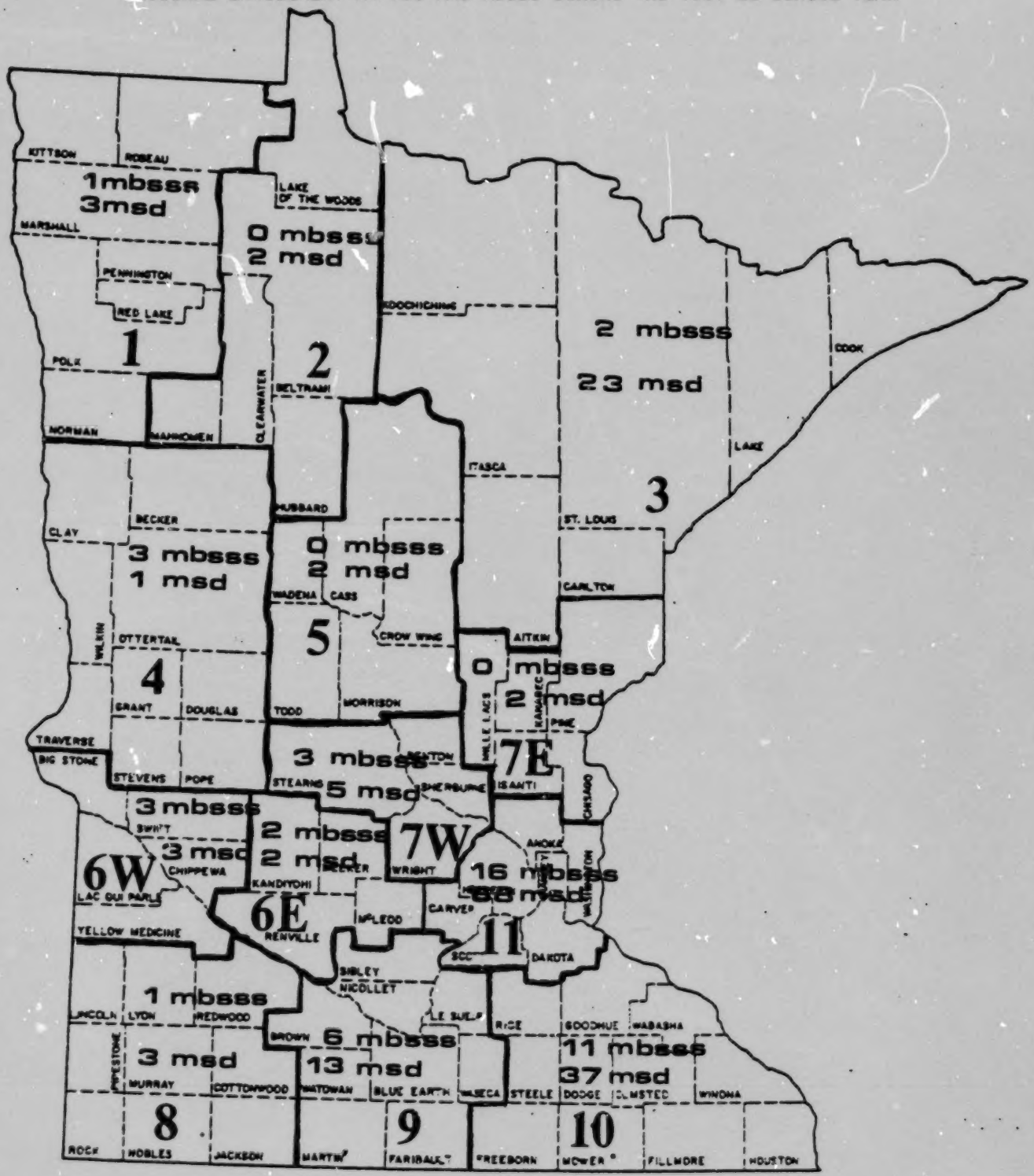

FARIBAULT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS
ENROLLMENTS FROM 1865 TO 1980
400
300
200
100
0
ENROLLMENT
SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BRAILLE SCHOOL
1860
1880
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
YEAR

FIGURE 3

REGIONAL ENROLLMENT AT MSD AND MBSSS DURING THE 1981-82 SCHOOL YEAR



Source: Minnesota Department of Education: Nonresident Student Report 1981-82.

The location of the residential schools at the geographic center of those regions is an important reason for the distribution of enrollment. It is more convenient for families in the metropolitan area and southern Minnesota to send their children to the residential schools than for parents from the western and northwestern parts of the state. In Appendix C, we present information on programs for hearing impaired, visually impaired, and deaf-blind students provided by local districts and special education cooperatives.

Historically, the residential schools served children who were hearing impaired or visually impaired, but who had no other handicaps. In an 1863 letter sent to parents of prospective students, the school administrators stated that "children who have failed to attain the ordinary growth and vigor of mind and body, should not be brought to the Institution under twelve years of age." Indeed, many of the students enrolled in MBSSS in 1961 had adequate residual vision to read large-print books, and many MSD students were classified as "hard-of-hearing" and had significant hearing ability. The school buildings on both campuses were designed to serve students with no mobility problems. Many buildings on both campuses contained architectural barriers which made them inaccessible to students using wheelchairs or whose mobility was otherwise impaired.

The proportion of single-handicapped students served in local school districts began to grow during the late 1950s. At the same time, the proportion of students with additional handicaps who were referred to the residential schools increased. In studies of the schools published in 1961, it was reported that an estimated 20 percent of the students at MBSSS and 30 percent of the students at MSD were multi-handicapped. Additional handicaps included speech impairment, hearing or vision loss, physical handicaps, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and an IQ lower than 78. However, the severity of these additional handicaps and their effect on students' educational needs were not well-documented. The expanded role of the Minnesota residential schools in serving multi-handicapped students was consistent with trends for residential schools in other states.

Of the two schools, it was the Braille School which changed its mission the most to accommodate multi-handicapped students. Enrollment in the traditional kindergarten through twelfth grade program for blind students, which once was the school's only program, declined to eleven students in 1983-84, including five high school seniors. MBSSS currently offers four ungraded programs for blind, deaf-blind, deaf/multi-handicapped, and blind/multi-handicapped students.

C. ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

In 1976, the Legislature transferred authority over the residential schools from the Department of Public Welfare to the State Board of Education and the Department of Education. Figure 4 reviews the administrative history of the two schools since 1863.

For most of their history, the two residential schools operated with separate administrations, faculties, and support staff. In 1975, administration of the two schools was unified under one superintendent. Support departments, including health, residential services, plant management, food, and accounting now serve both campuses jointly, although some staff persons are assigned to one campus. Figure 5 is an organizational chart for the residential schools.

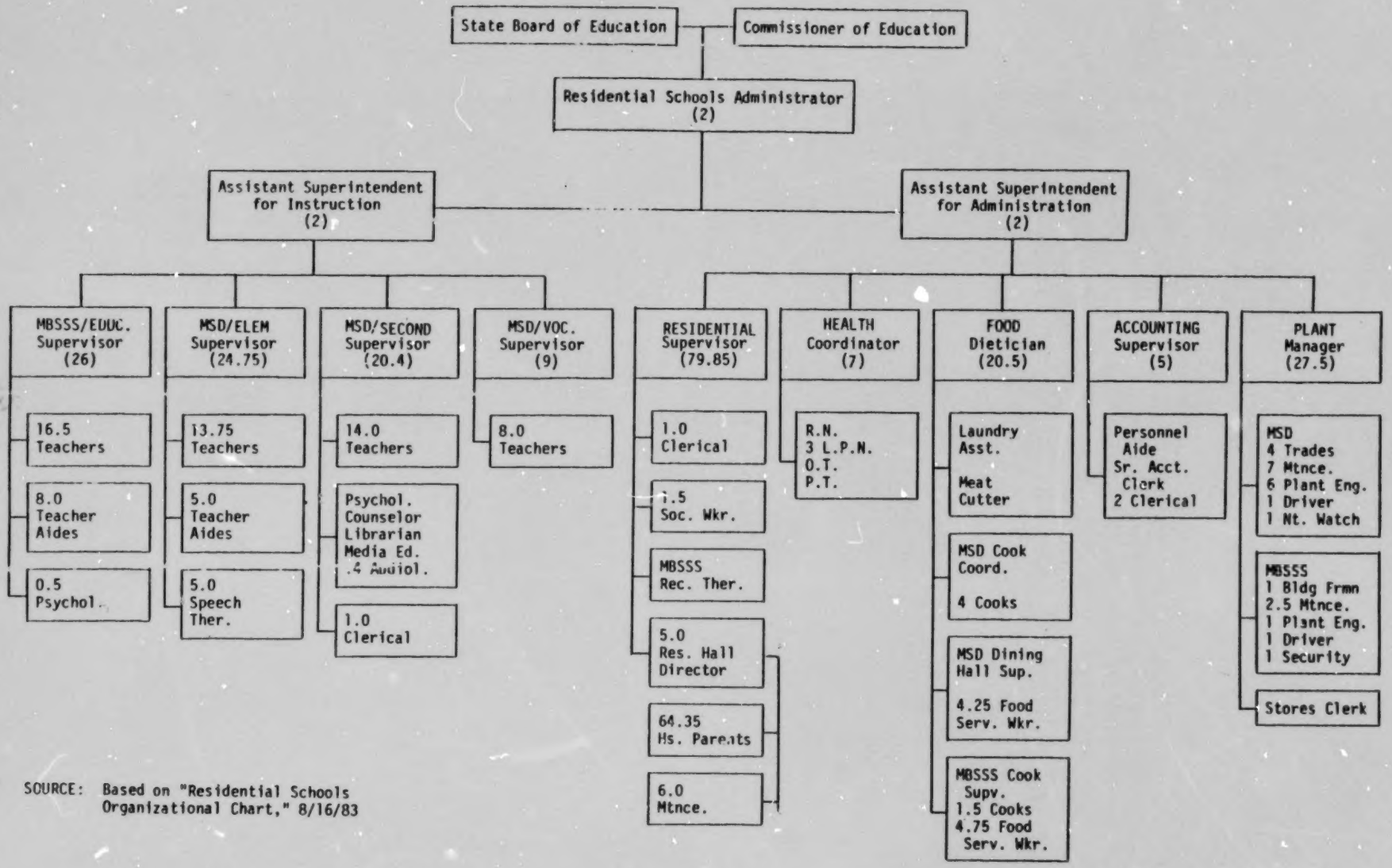
FIGURE 4

AUTHORITY OVER THE FARIBAULT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS
1863 - 1983

1863 - 1866	Schools governed by three commissioners named by the Legislature.
1866 - 1902	Board of Directors of five members appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate. The Governor and Superintendent of Public Instruction were ex-officio members of the Board.
1902 - 1917	Board of Control for state institutions created and given administrative authority over Faribault residential schools. Board of Directors retained some responsibility for instruction.
1917 - 1937	Board of Directors eliminated and Board of Control given all administrative authority.
1938 - 1953	Board of Control succeeded by Division of Public Institutions.
1953 - 1976	Division of Public Institutions succeeded by Department of Public Welfare.
1976 - date	Legislature transferred authority over schools to State Board of Education which delegated operating responsibilities to the Commissioner of Education. From 1976 to 1981, the schools were located in the Division of Special and Compensatory Education of the Department of Education. From 1981 to 1983, the schools reported to the deputy commissioner of education. After the department's 1983 reorganization, the superintendent of the residential schools reports to the Commissioner of Education as well as the Board of Education.

FICURE 5

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF FARIBAULT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS



SOURCE: Based on "Residential Schools Organizational Chart," 8/16/83

In 1983, a second assistant superintendent was appointed for the residential schools. As shown in Figure 5, one assistant superintendent supervises instructional programs while the other supervises residential and administrative services. There are three educational supervisors (principals) at the School for the Deaf: one each for elementary (kindergarten - eighth grade), secondary, and vocational instruction. There is one educational supervisor at the Braille School.

The number of clinical and other specialists serving both schools has increased in the last five years. MSD now employs four speech therapists, an audiologist, a school psychologist, and a counselor. The schools share an occupational therapist and a physical therapist. MBSSS has a recreational therapist and shares a psychologist with the educational program at the state hospital.

In 1982, the residential schools joined the Cannon Valley Special Education Cooperative and began to purchase staff services from the Cooperative. The Cooperative employs specialists in education of the hearing impaired and visually impaired who serve as liaisons for MSD and MBSSS students attending classes in the Faribault school district. Through the cooperative, the schools engage a speech therapist and two social workers.

Table 1 shows the authorized staff complement for both schools since 1978 as well as the combined enrollment at the two schools. It should be noted that prior to 1982, the schools did not spend significant portions of their budgets, and the balance was cancelled. For example, during the 1978-1979 biennium, more than 13 percent of the school's $8.1 million general fund appropriation was not spent and was cancelled at the end of the biennium. Thus, some funded positions shown on the table may have been vacant. The schools' state funded staff complement has decreased by 18 positions since 1978.

TABLE 1

AUTHORIZED STAFF COMPLEMENT AT FARIBAULT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, 1978 - 1985

Fiscal Year	MSD		MBSSS		Total Complement	Total Enrollment
	State	Federal	State	Federal		
1978	148.6	11.0	72.0	11.5	243.1	238
1979	148.6	14.0	72.0	12.5	247.1	231
1980	148.6	14.0	72.0	12.5	247.1	207
1981	148.7	14.0	72.0	12.5	245.2	229
1982	141.7	14.5	69.0	12.0	237.2	235
1983	141.7	14.4	69.0	12.0	237.1	228
1984	135.6	13.0	67.0	7.5	223.1	223
1985	135.6	13.0	67.0	7.5	223.1	---

Source: Biennial Budget Documents, 1979-81, 1981-83, 1983-85.

D. BUDGET

The Faribault residential schools are funded by the state through a direct General Fund appropriation and by certain federal funds. Table 2 shows the budgets for both schools and their respective funding sources for fiscal years since 1972. Expenditures at MSD increased 82 percent between 1976 and 1983; from $2.2 million in 1976 to $4.0 million in 1983. At MBSSS, the annual budget increased by 70 percent during that period: from $1.1 million in 1976 to $1.8 million in 1983.

Federal funds account for about six percent of each school's budget. These include per capita funding, food aids, and grants for instruction of deaf/blind children at the Braille School and for additional instructional and residential aides at the School for the Deaf. During 1983, the residential schools received federal aid of about $1,580 per student. By comparison, local school districts in Minnesota received about $236 per eligible student in federal special education aid under Public Law 94-142.

1. COST PER PUPIL

Table 3 shows expenditures and staff complement for five activity areas in each school. At both schools, about 41 percent of the budget is spent on instructional programs. Based on these expenditures, we calculated the cost per pupil at each school, which is shown in Table 4. We found that during 1983 it cost about $20,700 per pupil at the School for the Deaf and about $35,000 per Braille School pupil.[5] The higher costs at MBSSS are partly due to the lower teacher/student ratios required to meet the needs of multihandicapped students.

Clearly, residential care programs for children are expensive. In fact, the annual budget for the residential schools is only slightly less than the amount spent by all Minnesota school districts on special education programs for visually impaired and hearing impaired students. In 1981-82, local districts reported special education expenditures of $5.76 million, compared to the residential schools' budget of $5.3 million. Table 5 compares the annual cost per person of the Faribault residential schools with two state correctional facilities for youths. (The facilities at Red Wing and Sauk Centre provide an educational program.) The table also shows the instructional and residential costs for a school district and county of residence if they placed a child in a day school program for handicapped children in the metropolitan area.

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[5] While these costs are higher than costs reported for state residential schools in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois, such comparisons should be made very carefully. Among different residential schools, there are important differences in the proportion of severely multihandicapped students enrolled and in which expenses are included or excluded from the school budget.

TABLE 2

EXPENDITURES AND FUNDING SOURCE[a]
1972 - 1985

Year	Minnesota School for the Deaf			Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School			Total Expenditures
	State	Federal	Total	State	Federal	Total	
1972	$ 835,604	$ 96,816	$ 932,420	$ 355,072	$ 72,964	$ 428,036	$1,360,456
1974	954,814	117,732	1,072,546	431,662	90,607	522,269	1,594,815
1976	2,049,859	112,754	2,178,363	901,048	143,216	1,067,834	3,246,197
1977	2,275,873	99,211	2,391,064	1,140,570	119,005	1,269,295	3,660,359
1978	2,483,300	116,700	2,617,900	1,062,400	110,600	1,179,500	3,797,400
1979	2,515,100	165,200	2,681,400	1,142,900	116,700	1,264,100	3,945,500
1980	2,705,100	177,800	2,883,300	1,250,200	115,300	1,368,200	4,251,500
1981	2,914,200	212,700	3,127,000	1,296,100	112,500	1,413,000	4,540,000
1982	3,459,500	209,900	3,669,600	1,549,600	106,600	1,672,700	5,342,300
1983*	3,722,500	243,500	3,966,000	1,678,600	119,300	1,809,900	5,775,900
1984**	3,889,500	252,500	4,142,000	1,738,300	122,600	1,873,700	6,015,700
1985**	3,824,300	258,800	4,083,100	1,727,300	124,100	1,865,100	5,948,200

[a]Figures do not include capital expenditures for repairs and improvements to buildings.

* Estimated.

** Governor's recommendations.

TABLE 3

FARIBAULT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS: EXPENDITURES AND STAFF COMPLEMENT BY ACTIVITY
FISCAL YEAR 1983

Activity	Minnesota School for the Deaf			Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School		
	Expenditure	Percent	FTE Complement	Expenditure	Percent	FTE Complement
Instruction	$1,553,012	42.0%	55.15	$ 710,437	41.4%	27.5
Residential	597,806	16.2	42.85	418,271	24.4	25.5
Food Service and Health	438,642	11.8	20.50	162,547	9.5	8.0
Maintenance and Equipment	659,200	17.8	26.10	198,354	11.6	8.5
Administration and Other	450,768	12.1	9.00	225,721	13.1	6.0
TOTAL	$3,699,428	100.0%	153.60	$1,715,330	100.0%	75.5

Sources: Statewide Accounting System; Memo: "Faribault Residential Schools: F.T.E. by Activity," December 22, 1982.

TABLE 4

PER PUPIL COSTS DURING FISCAL YEAR 1983

	Minnesota School for the Deaf Enrollment = 179		Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School Enrollment = 49	
	Expenditures	Cost Per Student	Expenditures	Cost Per Student
Instructional	$1,553,012	$ 8,676	$ 710,437	$14,499
Residential	597,806	3,340	418,271	8,536
Food Service and Health	438,642	2,451	162,547	3,317
Maintenance and Equipment	659,200	3,683	198,354	4,048
Administration and Other	450,768	2,518	225,721	4,606
TOTAL	$3,669,428	$20,668	$1,715,330	$35,006

A number of factors increase the costs at the Faribault residential schools, some of which are not within the control of the schools' administration. For example, teachers at the schools are members of the Professional State Residential Instructional Unit, as are teachers at state hospitals and state correctional institutions for youths. The salary schedules for that unit are very similar to those paid to teachers in local school districts. In a local district, a teacher's salary would be based on about 182 "duty days" and would not include additional paid annual leave or holidays. However, a state residential school teacher also works 182 days in a school year, receives nine paid holidays during the year, and accrues annual leave at the same rates as other state employees. Faribault teachers may use their annual leave during vacation periods and may liquidate unused days at the end of the year. By one estimate, paid annual leave and holidays for all employees added $456,000 to the schools' budget during fiscal year 1983.

The state makes contributions to the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) and other retirement plans on behalf of local school districts. These costs are part of the budget of the Faribault residential schools. The state salary schedules for certain support jobs such as teaching aides, residential aides, and food service personnel in the residential schools are significantly higher than the schedules for similar employees in local school districts.

TABLE 5

EXPENDITURES AT RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS FOR YOUTHS
FISCAL YEAR 1983

	Expenditures	Enrollment	Cost Per Student
FARIBAULT SCHOOLS			
Minnesota School for the Deaf	$3,669,428	179	$20,668 - 9 Months
Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School	$1,715,330	49	$35,006 - 9 Months
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS			
Minnesota Correctional Facility -- Red Wing	$4,501,300	125	$36,010 - 12 Months
Minnesota Correctional Facility -- Sauk Centre	$3,662,770	100	$36,662 - 12 Months
OTHER			
Lakeview School for Physically Handicapped -- Worthington	$ 795,664	41	$19,600 - 9 Months
St. Paul School District -- Highland Park secondary program for deaf students plus foster residential care.[a]			$11,150 - 9 Months
St. Paul School District -- Bridgeview School programs for multi-handicapped students plus residential program in ICF-MR home.[b]			$33,400 - 9 Months

[a]Based on $27.71 daily billback rate for 175 school days plus $700 per month for nine months of specialized foster care. The social service budget of the student's county of residence would probably cover the cost of foster care.

[b]Based on $36.67 daily billback rate for 175 school days plus $3,000 per month for nine months of care in an Intermediate Care Facility for Mentally Retarded which is capable of serving multi-handicapped students. Note that Ramsey County has been able to place severely multi-handicapped students in specialized foster care for about $1,000 per month.

The St. Paul district billback rates in these two examples are not the total cost of the educational program. State aids for special education reduce the amount that the district needs to recover through the billback rate.

The residential schools employ five nurses who provide coverage of a ten-bed infirmary from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days a week. Their duties include distributing medications to students, treating minor illnesses and accidents, and participating in a regular health screening of each student. Some residential schools do not employ as many nurses. They delegate some responsibilities to the residential aides, such as handling medications, and contract with local doctors and nurses to provide services as needed.

2. TUITION

By law, a student's family is not responsible for the cost of tuition or room and board, only for providing spending money and clothing. If the student were placed in a state hospital or in a school program operated by a district in another county, the parents might make some payment toward the residential expenses, either in a flat fee or on a sliding scale basis. Each school district is responsible for the cost of transporting a student from the home district to Faribault several times each year. The school district can collect state transportation aid for that student.

According to state law, the school district in which the student lives is responsible for paying a fee to the state for the residential school program. The district's payment covers only a small portion of the actual costs of educating a student at the Faribault residential schools. The fee is tied to the foundation aid formula allowance, an amount established each year by the Legislature as a minimum per student expenditure for all school districts. During the 1982-83 school year, tuition was set as the sum of the foundation aid formula allowance for that student plus $500. The equation was: Per student district payment = (Foundation allowance X Pupil units) + $500.

- Example: During 1982-83, the annual tuition for a tenth grade student (secondary students count as 1.4 pupil units) was:

$$(\$1,346 \times 1.4) + \$500 = \$2,384.40.$$

The 1983 Legislature set the foundation allowance for 1983-84 at $1,475 per pupil unit and raised the additional fee for the residential schools to $1,000. Thus, during 1983-84, the district of residence would pay:

$$(\$1,475 \times 1.4) + \$1,000 = \$3,065.$$

That amounts to about 14 percent of the per pupil cost at MSD and less than 10 percent of the per pupil cost at MBSSS. The actual cost to the district of residence would be offset by the amount of state foundation aid received for a student sent to Faribault.

By comparison, the Worthington school district bills other school districts for students sent to the Lakeview School. In 1982-83, the Lakeview School had costs of about $19,600 per student. Direct

state aids to the school paid about 40 percent of that cost. The remainder was billed to the district of residence, which offsets about two-thirds of the bill by collecting various state aids for that student. For example, in 1982-83 state residential facilities aids paid 60 percent of tuition costs less the foundation aid formula allowance.[6] Thus, the net cost to a district to send a child to the Lakeview school was about $2,300 in 1982-83.

E. PHYSICAL PLANT

1. MINNESOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

The MSD campus covers 47½ acres and is attractive and well-maintained. Indeed, many of its buildings could blend into the nearby campuses of the Bishop Whipple boarding schools. There are 14 buildings, of which the oldest was built in 1909 and the newest in 1973 (see Figure 6). The campus includes about 272,000 square feet of building space and about 130,000 square feet of tunnels.

We conservatively estimate that about ten percent of the building areas, or 27,000 square feet, is underutilized or unusable. This includes one-third of the space in Noyes Hall, once the instructional center of MSD, which does not meet fire safety code standards.

Furthermore, both the dormitories and classroom buildings contain a significant amount of underused or unusable space. The three dormitories--Tate, Frechette, and Pollard Halls--have capacity for 287 students. Enrollment at MSD in September 1983 was 173 students.

Pollard Hall is the residence of 20 multi-handicapped students who are enrolled at MBSSS. During the summer of 1983, ramps and an elevator were installed in Pollard Hall in order to make the building accessible to non-ambulatory persons. The students living there will move into the new building on the MBSSS campus when it is completed in the spring of 1984. The administrators of MSD have discussed several uses for Pollard Hall including the establishment of a center that would provide comprehensive assessment services to deaf students and their families from throughout Minnesota.

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[6]During the 1981-82 school year, this aid was reduced to 35.7 percent of tuition costs less the foundation allowance.

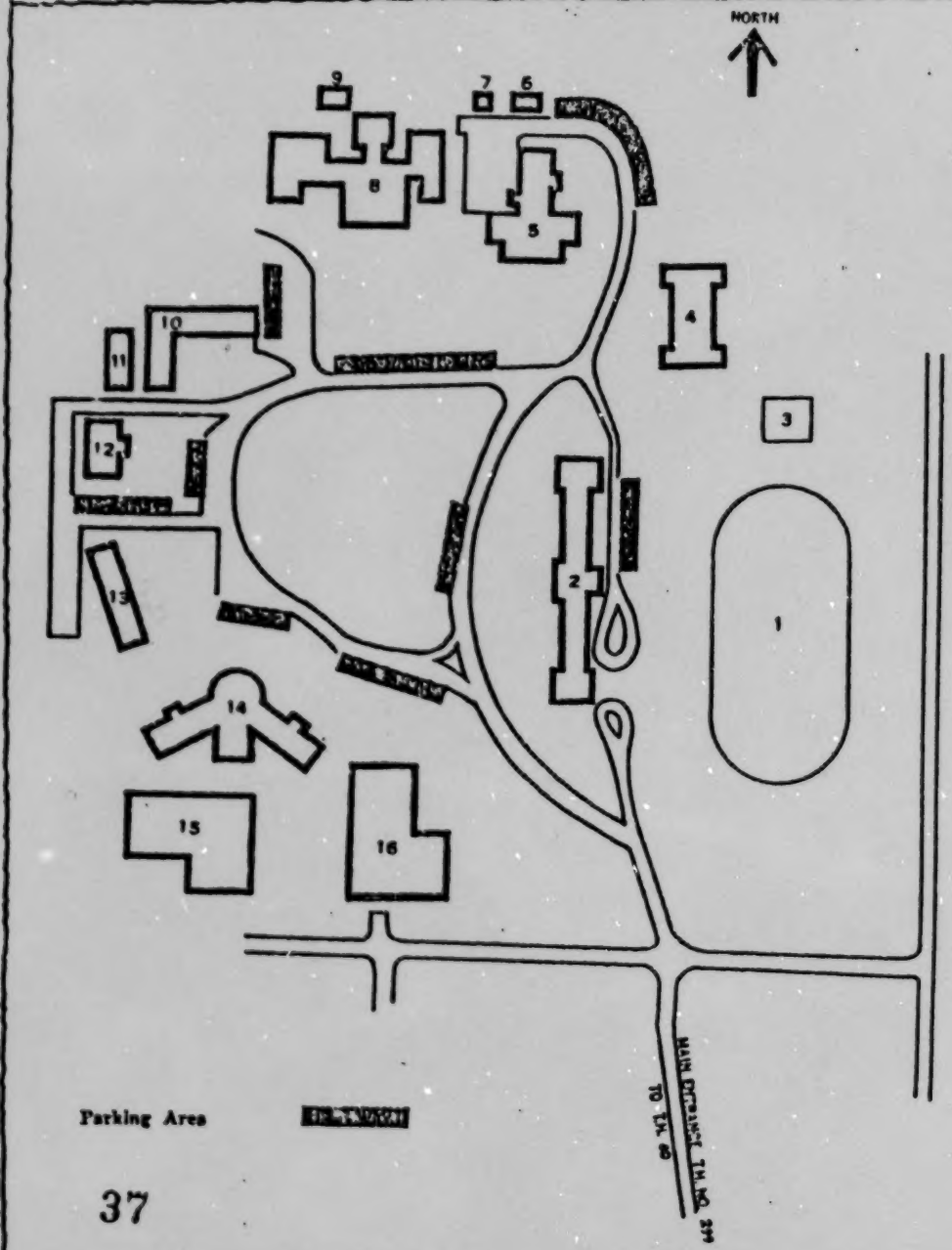


FIGURE 6

MINNESOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF , 1983

Faribault, Minnesota

1 Track & Football
2 Tate Hall (Girls dorm) and Administration
2 Health Clinic
3 Tennis Courts
4 Lauritsen Gym
5 Service Building (Kitchen Dining Rm and Storage)
6 Garage (Storage)
7 Transformer House
8 Frechette Hall (Boys dorm)
9 Scout House
10 Power Plant (Maintenance)
11 Laundry (Storage)
12 Mott Hall (Ind. Arts)
13 Pollard Hall (Younger students dorm)
14 Noyes Hall (Intermediate)
15 Quinn Hall (Primary)
16 Smith Hall (Advanced)

2. MINNESOTA BRAILLE AND SIGHT-SAVING SCHOOL

The Braille School campus includes 11 buildings on 21 acres (see Figure 7). The oldest building was completed in 1879. The newest building is the activity building, completed in 1959. That building contains a swimming pool and gymnasium and is also used by the state hospital and MSD. In the same year, a new building was constructed on the campus to house the Regional Library for the Blind. The library is operated by a separate division of the state Department of Education, but is used by MBSSS students and faculty.

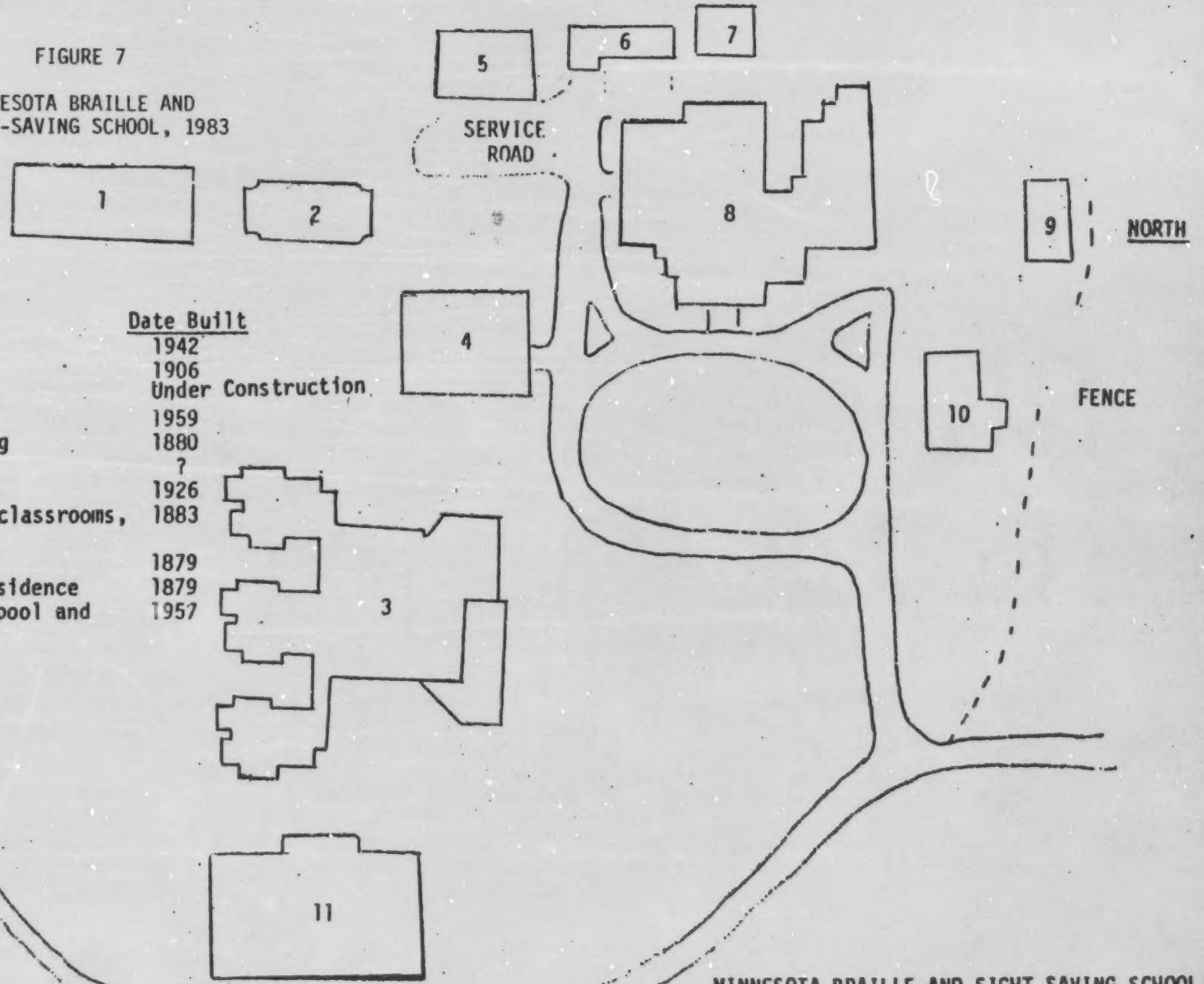
Many of the buildings are unused or underused. We estimate that 31,500 square feet of the existing 117,765 square feet of building area are underutilized. In part, this is because some of the buildings do not meet fire safety code standards.

In March 1984, a new classroom and dormitory building will be completed on the Braille School campus. As shown in the chronology in Figure 8, the $4.6 million building represents many years of studies and discussions of how to meet the space and program needs of the Braille School. In 1979, the Legislature decided to authorize construction of a new facility on the MBSSS campus, rather than consolidating the two schools on the School for the Deaf campus. This decision means that the state will incur additional costs to maintain the Braille School campus.

The new building will have classroom and dormitory space for 75 students. When the move to the new building is completed, several old buildings on the Braille School campus will be demolished, including two unused houses and two service buildings. The future use of Dow Hall is uncertain. It contains part of the heating plant for the campus and is used by the Regional Library for the Blind for overflow storage of materials.

FIGURE 7

MINNESOTA BRAILLE AND
SIGHT-SAVING SCHOOL, 1983



	Date Built
1. Vocational Building	1942
2. West Cottage	1906
3. New Building	Under Construction
4. Library (Regional)	1959
5. Maintenance Building	1880
6. Garage	?
7. Laundry	1926
8. Dow Hall (academic classrooms, offices, kitchen)	1883
9. Old House (Storage)	1879
10. Superintendent's Residence	1879
11. Activity Building (pool and gym)	1957

FIGURE 8

CHRONOLOGY

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW EDUCATIONAL AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDING AT MINNESOTA BRAILLE AND SIGHT-SAVING SCHOOL

1974 A fire damaged Dow Hall, the largest building on the MBSSS campus.

1977 Legislature directed Department of Education to "make a study of program space needs at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School and submit the results of the study to the legislature by January 1, 1978. The study shall include consideration of the use of existing state buildings." Laws 1977, Chapter 449, Section 1.

1978 Department submitted report with no recommendation. Legislature appropriated $123,700 "For the purpose of planning an educational residential facility for blind and multiple handicapped students and for remodeling at the Minnesota School for the Deaf to provide temporary accommodations for the multi-handicapped students presently residing in Dow Hall at the Minnesota braille and sight-saving school." Laws 1978, Chapter 793, Section 23.

1979 In March, the Board and Department of Education recommended that a new facility be constructed on the MSD campus, at an estimated cost of $6,360,000, to serve blind and multi-handicapped students. Implementation of the recommendation would have, in effect, closed the MBSSS campus. In May, the Legislature appropriated $225,000 "for the demolition or alternative use of obsolete buildings and working drawings for the construction of a building for which construction costs shall not exceed $4,200,000 for blind and multi-handicapped students on the campus of the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School." Laws 1979, Chapter 338, Section 5.

1980 The Legislature did not pass a bonding bill during the 1980 session.

1981 Early in the session, the Legislature appropriated $4,605,000 for "construction, building demolition, vocational building code compliance, utilities, site work, and fees on the campus of the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School." Laws 1981, Chapter 4, Section 5.

1982 Construction of the new building was delayed until August because of high interest rates.

1984 Building is scheduled to be completed in March.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE MINNESOTA BRAILLE AND SIGHT-SAVING SCHOOL

The Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School (MBSSS) has served blind and partially sighted students since 1866. During this time the school has witnessed changes in its organizational structure, in the demographics of its student body, and in the philosophy of special education. With the completion of a new building, MBSSS will undergo a change in physical facilities. In addition, MBSSS has evolved since 1962 from a traditional residential school for the visually impaired into an institution which also serves a sensory impaired, multi-handicapped population. To determine how well the school has adapted to these changes we asked:

- Who attends the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School and how are these students served?
- How good is the educational program at MBSSS?
- Is there a need for a residential school for visually impaired students in Minnesota?

A. TRENDS IN EDUCATION OF THE BLIND

In Chapter I we detailed the history of the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School. To put this information into perspective, we examined national trends in education of the visually impaired since the school's inception.

The first half century of MBSSS's existence, 1866-1915, coincided with a period during which the philosophy of education of the blind favored the residential school. During this time, 90 percent of all blind students throughout the United States were enrolled in residential schools, while the remaining 10 percent attended day school programs and lived at home.

In the ensuing years, the distribution of blind children between these two educational settings shifted markedly. National enrollment figures for 1972 indicate that more than two-thirds of all blind children attended day school classes, while less than one-third received their education in residential schools. However, while residential schools like MBSSS serve a smaller proportion of the visually impaired population, the number of multi-handicapped students served has increased.

Several factors have caused these changes. The major impetus for the shift from residential to day programs came with the epidemic occurrence of retrolental fibroplasia (RLF), which left approximately 12,000 children blind. RLF reached its height between

1940 and 1954 when it was determined that oxygen therapy administered to premature infants in incubators resulted in blindness.[1] As children with RLF reached school age, their parents joined forces to advocate that special education programs be offered at the local level. This represented a significant move away from the residential school and towards the introduction of the itinerant teacher system.

A second epidemic, that of maternal rubella, occurred in the mid-1960s. The "rubella bulge" in the population represents 30,000 multi-handicapped children, of whom an estimated 5,000-6,000 are blind.[2] Local school districts recognized the difficulty of educating a deaf-blind or multi-handicapped child and turned to residential schools to assume greater responsibility for these individuals. Accommodating the needs of these students forced changes in the mission and structure of residential schools for the blind.

A third factor which had a significant impact on the role of the residential school was the passage in 1975 of Public Law 94-142. This legislation, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, mandated that disabled students be educated in the least restrictive environment. While admittedly a residential school was the least restrictive environment for some children, particularly the multi-handicapped, the intent of the law was to return students to local school programs with appropriate support services whenever feasible. This strengthened the growth of programs for the visually impaired at the local level.

Finally, residential schools are affected by the growing number of premature and high risk infants now surviving due to advances in medical technology. These children, many of whom are multi-handicapped, present a new challenge to the educational system when they attain school age. As local districts retain blind youngsters who are otherwise unimpaired, residential schools are called upon to serve visually impaired, multi-handicapped students in their place.

The Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School, along with other residential schools for the visually impaired across the nation, has been faced with a steadily declining enrollment since the 1950s and a dramatic change in student needs during the last decade. We interviewed administration and staff at the school, reviewed student files and observed classes in progress as part of our effort to determine how well MBSSS has met these challenges.

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[1] Retrolental fibroplasia (RLF) is an eye disease in which the retina is partially or completely detached and pulled forward against the posterior surface of the lens.

[2] Maternal rubella, or German Measles, contracted during the first trimester of pregnancy may cause congenital anomalies including heart disease, genitourinary disorders and serious ocular problems. The most common eye complications include cataracts, colobomas, nystagmus, microphthalmos, strabismus, retinopathy and glaucoma.

B. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School operated as a traditional school for the visually impaired from its establishment in 1866 until 1962. During this period, students at the school were served in a graded program with classes offered at every level from kindergarten through high school. Extra-curricular activities included a band and a wrestling team, both of which were a source of pride to the school. Over the past twenty years, MBSSS has changed significantly, and now includes a graded program for the blind and four ungraded programs for the blind, deaf/multi-handicapped, blind/multi-handicapped, and deaf-blind.[3] We looked at the characteristics of the student population for the past decade to determine who is served at MBSSS and how the educational program is implemented.

1. THE GRADED PROGRAM FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

a. Characteristics of the Student Population

Table 6 shows the 1973-83 student enrollment at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School in graded programs for the visually impaired. This table has been divided into two groups: students enrolled at the elementary level (grades 1-6), and those in secondary level classes (grades 7-12). Following the 1978-79 school year, the number of students enrolled in graded classes decreased sharply, with the more pronounced drop occurring at the elementary level. Records for the 1983-84 school year indicate that of the eight secondary level students, five are in grade 12, two are in grade 11, and one is in grade 10. The only new students enrolled in the graded program this year are three elementary level students (all members of the same family) with one child each in grades 3, 5, and 6. These three students are enrolled for the 1983-84 school year, while their local school district recruits a teacher to fill a vacancy in its resource room. Thus, if no new students are placed in the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School graded program, it will be empty within three years.

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[3] In this report, a "graded program" refers to a traditional kindergarten through twelfth grade school where students are grouped into classes according to age. An "ungraded program" refers to the grouping of students with similar disabilities or homogeneous functioning levels, irrespective of age. Students in the graded program are evaluated quarterly, in contrast to those in the ungraded program who are evaluated once at the end of the school year.

TABLE 6

MBSSS STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN GRADED PROGRAMS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS, 1973-1983

School Year	Elementary Grades	Secondary Grades	Total Number of Students in Graded Programs	Percent of Total Enrollment
1973-74	15	20[a]	35	45%
1974-75	15	17	32	47
1975-76	12	15	27	45
1976-77	13	15	28	47
1977-78	9	7	16	32
1978-79	6	11	17	36
1979-80	1	10	11	26
1980-81	1	10	11	24
1981-82	1	14	15	27
1982-83	1	9	10	21
1983-84	3	8	11	22

Source: MBSSS Daily Attendance Records, 1973-1983.

[a]Includes two graduates who remained on for the 1973-74 school year for coursework in piano tuning.

b. Organization of Classes

The graded program at MBSSS for the 1983-84 school year has 11 students ranging from third to twelfth grade level. The small size of the program and the disparity in students' ages make it virtually impossible to bring homogeneous groups together into classes. Instead, student schedules are arranged on an individual basis depending on teacher availability within MBSSS and course offerings at the Faribault local schools. The small numbers of students and teachers at MBSSS make it difficult for the school to offer a variety of courses.

Five high school seniors currently receive their mathematics, science, english, and physical education instruction together at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School. They are mainstreamed for all other courses in Faribault Senior High School. MBSSS is responsible for those subjects which require adaptations for visually impaired students and would not lend themselves as readily to a mainstreamed class.

There are two eleventh grade students, one of whom is mainstreamed at the high school for five periods a day. The other eleventh grader remains at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School for instruction and is integrated into the school's ungraded secondary level classes.

The tenth grade student receives most of his instruction at MBSSS and is mainstreamed in the Faribault High School on a limited basis. Classes at MBSSS for this individual are primarily with older students from the graded program.

The remaining three students in the graded program are at the third, fifth, and sixth grade levels. These three students receive individualized instruction within a single classroom, which also includes two secondary level students from the ungraded blind program. In addition, the graded students are mainstreamed at the local elementary school for a portion of the school day.

2. UNGRADED PROGRAMS AT THE MINNESOTA BRAILLE AND SIGHT-SAVING SCHOOL

a. History

The introduction during the 1962-63 school year of a "primary special class" for multi-handicapped students marked a turning point in the history of MBSSS. Until that year, students who were unable to function academically with their peers were placed on the school's "audit plan." Under the plan, a child was retained once or twice in a grade. If he was unable to come up to grade standards during that time, he was moved along with the rest of his group without further modification in curriculum or special class plan. A 1961 study of the school conducted by the state Department of Education was highly critical of this approach.[4] The department questioned the inattention to individual differences and needs by a school responsible for the education of special children. In response, a special class was instituted at MBSSS during the 1962-63 school year.

Over the next few years, this special class evolved into two ungraded programs, one for blind multi-handicapped children and one for those who were deaf-blind. In 1978, an ungraded deaf class for one multi-handicapped student was established at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School. The move from MSD to MBSSS for this student was recommended by an assistant commissioner of education, and was explained as follows:

> The developmental program currently serving the deaf-blind should be expanded to serve the severely multiply-handicapped deaf. It is the considered opinion of the educational

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[4] James J. Geary, Chairman, A Study of the Minnesota Braille and Sight Saving School at Faribault, Minnesota. (a report by the Special Education Section, Minnesota Department of Education, November 1961), p. 25.

specialists consulted that the programmatic needs of the severely multiply handicapped . . . are esseptially the same as the programmatic needs of the deaf-blind.[5]

The state Department of Education and the Faribault residential schools agreed that the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School should assume responsibility for Level 6 services to multi-handicapped, sensory impaired children. They understood that MBSSS's declining enrollment of students who were able to function in traditional, graded programs for the visually impaired could not long justify keeping MBSSS in operation. The following school year, 1979-1980, saw the beginning of the fourth special ungraded program: a class for four blind students.

Between 1979 and 1981, deaf-blind and multi-handicapped students enrolled at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School were educated in Noyes Hall on the MSD campus.[6] In September 1981, these students were moved to Dow Hall on the MBSSS campus, where they have remained.

b. Characteristics of the Student Population

Table 7 shows the enrollment in ungraded programs at MBSSS from 1973 to 1983. The number of students in these programs has remained fairly constant over the last decade, averaging between 30 and 40 children. However, the completion of the new building could result in some new placements. The Department of Public Welfare's Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped has identified 18 deaf-blind students currently in local school district programs as "potential candidates for MBSSS." Further consideration of a move for these students is contingent upon the opening of the new building which will be architecturally barrier-free and the projected expansion of deaf-blind classes to provide peer groups for both high and low functioning individuals.

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[5]"State Residential Schools Program Recommendations," Memorandum from Will Antell, Ed.D. to members of the State Board of Education, September 1, 1978, p. 2.

[6]A group of mentally retarded students from the Faribault Area Training and Education Center at the Faribault State Hospital also used the facilities at Noyes Hall during this period.

TABLE 7

MBSSS STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN UNGRADED PROGRAMS,
1973 - 1983

School Year	Blind Multi-Handicapped	Deaf Blind	Deaf Multi-Handicapped	Blind	Total Number of Students in Ungraded Programs
1973-74	25	15	--	--	40
1974-75	20	16	--	--	36
1975-76	14	19	--	--	33
1976-77	14	18	--	--	32
1977-78	22	12	--	--	34
1978-79	17	12	1	--	30
1979-80	10	16	2	4	32
1980-81	6	10	6	12	34
1981-82	8	11	12	9	40
1982-83	9	11	11	7	38
1983-84	8	11	12	8	39

Source: MBSSS Daily Attendance Records, 1973-1983.

c. Organization of Classes

1) Ungraded Blind Multi-Handicapped Program

Eight blind multi-handicapped students are being educated as one group for the 1983-84 school year. This class, which ranges from third to eleventh grade students, is staffed by one teacher and two teacher assistants. The head teacher of the class is certified in the areas of education of trainable mentally retarded, educable mentally retarded, visually handicapped, and emotionally disturbed. The curriculum for blind multi-handicapped students includes speech, language, reading and writing, mathematics, physical education, music, art, and computers. In addition, students receive occupational and physical therapy on an individual basis as needed.

2) Ungraded Deaf-Blind Program

The 11 students in the ungraded deaf-blind program are divided into three self-contained units, on the basis of ability. Only one teacher is trained in education of the deaf-blind (one of two such individuals currently teaching in Minnesota). The other two classes are taught by two teachers of the visually impaired, one of whom is certified in education of the mentally retarded. There are also three

teacher assistants (one is a certified teacher) and three teacher aides (i.e., houseparents) who rotate among the deaf-blind classes. Support services for these students include: adaptive home economics, speech therapy, adaptive physical education, music therapy, physical and occupational therapy, and industrial arts.

3) Ungraded Deaf Multi-Handicapped Program

Twelve deaf multi-handicapped students are divided by age into two classes, each with six children. A teacher of the hearing impaired who was originally employed by MSD teaches one class. The other class is taught by a teacher licensed in education of the visually impaired, educable mentally retarded, learning disabled, and remedial and developmental reading. Each teacher has an assistant (one is a certified teacher) and an aide working in the classroom. The curriculum for these deaf multi-handicapped students includes instruction in physical education, money management, home economics, industrial arts, and a story hour and time for socialization at the end of the school day. Older students in this group are assigned to the work activity center of the Faribault State Hospital, where they are given simple, paying tasks.

4) Ungraded Blind Program

The ungraded blind program, with a total of eight students, is divided into two classes. A teacher licensed in education of the educable mentaliy retarded teaches the lower functioning group, with a teacher of the visually handicapped responsible for the higher functioning group. The first group has six secondary level students, while the second group includes two secondary level students and three elementary level children from the graded program.

The curriculum for these students includes subjects such as english, social studies, physical education, science, braille, orientation and mobility, mathematics, typing, and home economics. Older students participate in a work-study program on the school campus.

C. ADMISSIONS, PLACEMENT AND EXIT PROCEDURES

Chapter VII-A of the rules of the state Department of Education details the requirements and procedures for admission to the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School.[7] The district in which the student resides submits an application for admission, a copy of the prospective student's most recent individualized education program, and an explanation of the reasons for the proposed transfer to the residential school. Upon receipt of these materials, the administrator of the residential school schedules a meeting to determine the appropriateness of placing the applicant in the residential school. The team representing MBSSS at this meeting includes: two administrators, one each from the education and residential programs, a member

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[7] 5 MCAR, §1.0134.

of the teaching staff, and members of the support staff as indicated by the needs of the child. The parent, the student if possible, and a representative of the local school district should also be present.

Of the 13 student files we reviewed, only two contained all of the necessary application information. The same files also indicated that the admissions team did not always include all the individuals specified in rule. While it is conceivable that the gaps are in the school's record-keeping system, our interviews indicate that the admissions process is very informal.

We also found that the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School is not selective when choosing students for admission. With only a few exceptions, all applicants are accepted into MBSSS. By law, however, a student should be accepted only if the school provides the most appropriate setting in the least restrictive environment. The admissions team should weigh the decision to admit carefully, before assuming responsibility for a student's education.

The student files which we examined also showed significant gaps in the information utilized by MBSSS staff during the placement process. Three files included scores from standardized tests, such as the WISC or Stanford-Binet, individualized education programs and records from the school district of residence, as well as evaluations by vision and hearing specialists.[8] Other files lacked information in one or more of these areas. MBSSS should make every reasonable effort to secure all available background information for the applicant to be used during the placement process.

The student files also indicated that exit criteria are not stipulated within the individualized education programs. We found that students generally leave the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School if the family moves out of state or when the child reaches graduation age, and in limited instances when the MBSSS staff feels that the student is ready to return to the local school district. One individualized education program did contain a suggestion that the student return to his school district of residence, but did not specify what requisite skills should be mastered prior to the transfer. The need for a residential setting for visually impaired students with no concomitant handicaps decreases once they learn basic skills such as braille and mobility. Many of these students can function readily in a mainstream environment at the local level, with proper support services. However, we found no evidence within the IEPs that MBSSS actively promotes this approach.

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[8]The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) measures intelligence in children by testing verbal and mathematical aptitude. The WISC may be administered to visually impaired children without significant modification. The Stanford-Binet Test of Intelligence measures language and mathematical aptitude. The test has been adapted for visually handicapped children, although the time required for administration is lengthy. Selected items and subtests have also been used with multi-handicapped children.

We recommend that:

- The admissions and individualized education program teams be expanded to include an individual who is knowledgeable in education of the visually handicapped, but who is not affiliated with the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School or with the local school district.

The introduction of an unbiased and disinterested individual into the admissions and IEP meetings would provide for objective decisions regarding the student. This individual could be the child's caseworker from the Department of Public Welfare's Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped or a teacher of the visually impaired who is not employed by MBSSS or the student's local school district. This outside party should participate in the decision regarding placement in the residential school. Since the newly designated committee member would have no vested interest in placing the student at MBSSS or retaining him in the local school district he would serve solely as the child's advocate.

To the greatest extent possible, students should return to their local school districts once they have mastered basic skills such as braille and mobility. These skills should be specified at the admissions meeting, and the child's progress toward achieving them should be evaluated annually at the IEP conference. The presence of an individual from outside MBSSS or the local district would ensure that the best interests of the child were served during the evaluation process.

D. ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

As indicated by the enrollment figures, MBSSS now serves an increasing number of multi-handicapped students in addition to its visually impaired population. We found, however, that the school lacks the staff necessary to properly handle this responsibility.

For example, we think the Braille School needs an administrator who can provide technical leadership in educating multi-handicapped children. The principal's position has been held since 1980 by an individual trained in orientation and mobility instruction. This individual has expertise in the area of visual impairment, but no training in education of the multi-handicapped. In October 1981, a teacher of the deaf-blind was given the responsibility of coordinating programs for the multi-handicapped. This appointment enabled the principal to continue to oversee the traditional, graded program while the teacher/coordinator assumed responsibility for the ungraded programs. Although this division of responsibility seemed a logical move, the coordinator soon assumed a full-time classroom assignment.

We interviewed teachers, observed them in the classrooms, and reviewed their credentials to determine their qualifications for employment at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School. Teachers at MBSSS have long tenures, with three such individuals employed

by the school for more than two decades. We were favorably impressed by the overall dedication of the teachers, and by their concern for the educational needs of their students. The fact that MBSSS does retain teachers of a high caliber should not go unrecognized.

There are 17 teachers on staff at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School. Thirteen hold licenses in education of the visually handicapped, kindergarten through grade 12. The other four include a teacher of a deaf-blind class who is trained in that area, and a teacher of an ungraded deaf multi-handicapped class who is licensed in education of the hearing impaired. The two individuals who are not licensed in either vision or hearing include a teacher of the ungraded blind class, licensed in education of the educable mentally retarded, and a speech clinician licensed in speech correction. Other licenses held by various staff members include elementary education, various subjects in secondary education, and education of the learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, and trainable mentally retarded.

Although these licenses represent a diversely qualified staff trained to work with visually impaired and multi-handicapped populations, we question some of the teacher placements. For example, one teacher works with a deaf multi-handicapped class, yet is not licensed in education of the hearing impaired. We recognize that appropriate licensure does not necessarily ensure quality teaching. However, there is an irrefutable need for a school to maintain minimum standards of training for its staff.

Only one of the three teachers of deaf-blind classes has formal training in serving the special needs of that group. Deaf-blindness is an entity unto itself and is not merely the sum of vision and hearing impairments. The methodology and communication techniques employed in teaching the deaf-blind are different from those used in instruction of the visually handicapped or hearing impaired. In the 1980-81 school year, a deaf-blind student was withdrawn from the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School. At a due process hearing, the parents cited as a source of concern the school's inability to provide a trained teacher of the deaf-blind for their child. Following a conciliation conference, the child was returned to MBSSS for the 1981-82 school year and is currently being taught by a teacher trained in education of the deaf-blind. However, this teacher will be leaving MBSSS in January 1984.

We also found the lack of appropriately licensed personnel to be a problem in the school's orientation and mobility program. This area of instruction is an integral part of education of the visually impaired, as it enables the student to function successfully within his physical environment. Orientation and mobility instruction includes such skills as sighted guide techniques, self-protection, and the use of a cane. Spatial concepts and body awareness are also taught to younger students. Orientation and mobility at MBSSS is taught by two teacher aides, one on a full-time basis, and the other on a part-time basis. Both of these aides work under the direction of the MBSSS principal, who is an orientation and mobility specialist.

We recognize that this model of supervision of teachers by trained orientation and mobility instructors has been implemented successfully in the outstate areas on a very limited basis. Nevertheless, we feel that a state residential school for the visually impaired should employ a trained orientation and mobility instructor to provide direct instruction to students.

Support services at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School are provided by a physical therapist and a newly hired occupational therapist, both of whom have dual responsibility for MSD and MBSSS. The school employs a recreational therapist and contracts with the Cannon Valley Special Education Cooperative for the services of a half-time psychologist and a half-time social worker. However, the school has had difficulties dealing with students with serious behavior problems. Teachers uniformly expressed a need for additional help with assessment and intervention procedures for students exhibiting behavior problems.

The residential staff at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School, like the teaching staff, has been called upon increasingly to serve multi-handicapped students. The residential program supervisor has instituted a series of in-service workshops and has improved the staff-to-student ratios for those houseparents who work with multi-handicapped children. Six houseparents who are employed for the 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. shift prepare their charges for the school day and then work as teacher aides in the classroom. Although this fusion of the residential and educational components of the program is an excellent idea, we are concerned that the aides are not adequately trained for classroom duties. We feel that this practice should not be discontinued, but that the school should upgrade the qualifications for houseparent/teacher aides and carefully delineate the duties of the job.

In addition, our interviews have indicated that communication between the instructional and residential staff is limited, primarily due to the constraints of time. Under the present arrangement, teachers are on duty during the school day, while houseparents work before or after the school day. Conflicting schedules make it difficult to arrange meetings between teachers and houseparents. However, we feel that teachers and houseparents need to work together to complement one another's efforts towards educating the students, and that the school should allocate time during the school week for them to meet and exchange ideas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend:

- A position of coordinator of programs for the multi-handicapped should be established.

The Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School cannot continue to operate as a traditional, residential school for the blind. The shift in population from students with visual impairments to those who are severely multi-handicapped necessitates a corresponding change in the structure of the school. This may be achieved by establishing a the position of coordinator of programs for the multi-handicapped, with the principal retaining responsibility for the graded vision program as well as overseeing the entire education program at the school. Alternatively, with the impending retirement of the current principal, MBSSS could fill the vacancy with an individual trained in education of the sensory impaired, multi-handicapped student. This new supervisor would then assume dual responsibility for the program for the visually impaired and multi-handicapped students.

- Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School teachers should be trained and licensed in the areas of education to which they are assigned.

We recognize that it is frequently difficult to secure teachers skilled in an area for which there is no formal training program in Minnesota, such as orientation and mobility. Since the state Department of Education does not offer licensure in education of the deaf-blind, it is unrealistic to require that teachers of the deaf-blind hold an appropriate Minnesota license. We recommend, however, that the administration at MBSSS make every reasonable effort to secure additional training for the presently employed staff. This would include sending teachers to in-service workshops, continuing education courses, and preferably university programs for specialized training in education of the sensory impaired, multi-handicapped student.

- The support services at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School should be expanded to include additional behavior management personnel.

MBSSS currently employs a half-time psychologist trained in behavior management. While this represents a good beginning effort, the need for this type of service has been steadily increasing at the school.

- The school's administration should carefully delineate the role of the residential staff in relation to the educational staff.

The residential staff at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School should be considered an integral part of the school's education program. Houseparents should be included at teacher meetings, in-service workshops, and continuing education programs offered both within and outside MBSSS. This will enable the houseparent and teacher to complement one another's instruction of students in both the classroom and dormitory settings.

E. MAINSTREAMING OF STUDENTS

As we described earlier in this chapter, nine Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School students have been mainstreamed in the Faribault district schools. Teachers at MBSSS use three criteria to decide whether a student has the potential to be mainstreamed successfully: does he have adequate orientation and mobility skills to function in the new setting; is he academically able to manage the curriculum; and will he be socially accepted by his sighted peers, i.e., does he have any blind mannerisms?

Students who attempt the mainstream classes do not always succeed. Specific instances have been cited of individuals returning to MBSSS because they were unable to handle the social or the academic aspects of the mainstream program. The successful integration of a handicapped student involves considerably more than a physical placement in a mainstream setting. Teachers in the Faribault district schools should receive ongoing support from the MBSSS staff to enable them to properly instruct the visually impaired student. Students in the local schools must be sensitized to the particular needs of a handicapped student. The expertise for both of these tasks is readily available at MBSSS, but has not been offered to the local schools.

In addition, teachers in the Faribault local school district are not required to submit individualized education programs for the visually impaired students who attend mainstream classes. Although this may seem to be a minor procedural matter, it does reflect a lack of cooperation between MBSSS and the Faribault district schools. Unless teachers from both systems work together to make joint decisions about mainstreamed students, it cannot be expected that the transition will be a smooth one for all involved.

We recommend:

- Administrators at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School should allocate time for teachers to become more actively involved with the local schools in the mainstreaming process.

A 1983 on-site review of MBSSS by the state Department of Education cited the school for failure to develop a system for making decisions regarding public school placement; for not providing materials and ongoing consultation to the public school staff; and for neglecting to regularly review student progress in the mainstream program. The Cannon Valley Special Education Cooperative does employ a teacher who provides direct support services to blind and partially sighted students mainstreamed in the local schools. However, the responsibilities of this teacher do not include addressing all of those issues posed in the review. In order for students from MBSSS to be mainstreamed successfully, residential school teachers must be willing to spend time in the local schools working with the teachers who will be responsible for MBSSS students.

It should be noted that some of the issues discussed in Chapters II and III regarding individualized education programs, mainstreaming, and admissions, exit, and placement criteria, have also been addressed by the Minnesota Department of Education compliance report of spring 1983. The residential schools have recently prepared a corrective action plan in response to the compliance report and have begun taking measures to correct the problems.

F. THE MINNESOTA BRAILLE AND SIGHT-SAVING SCHOOL AS A STATE RESOURCE

In our interviews with individuals at agencies serving the visually impaired, including the state Department of Education, DPW's Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, and special education directors at the local level, they described limited dealings with MBSSS. These agencies cite a variety of factors which have contributed to the lack of interaction with MBSSS, including the location of the school in Faribault away from the metropolitan area, constraints of time, and deliberate decisions by administrators of the agencies to remain detached from the state schools.

While these agencies are partly to blame for this situation, the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School has made little effort to change the status quo. A state residential school for the visually impaired should not exist as an isolated institution. Rather, it should offer itself as a resource for ideas and a place where those involved in education of the visually impaired and sensory impaired, multi-handicapped may seek advice and assistance. MBSSS could offer workshops and in-service training to teachers and families of handicapped students. The staff at the school also needs to involve itself in other areas of education by attending conferences which deal with issues other than special education. If MBSSS is to continue to exist on the instructional continuum of services, the school should be integrated into the state's education system.

We recommend that:

- The Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School should serve the state as a resource in education of the visually impaired and sensory impaired, multi-handicapped student.

There are a number of ways in which this recommendation could be implemented. The school could provide materials, consultative services and workshops for families and teachers with limited training in education of visually handicapped and sensory impaired, multi-handicapped children. In addition, MBSSS could serve as a host program for special education teaching interns. With the impending reactivation of the University of Minnesota program to prepare teachers of the visually impaired, MBSSS would be a logical choice for a field placement for student teachers. The influx of student interns would offer the opportunity for the exchange of ideas between potential special educators and experienced teachers.

G. THE NEED FOR A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The underlying question in an evaluation of the program at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School is: what is the contemporary and future need in Minnesota for a residential school for the blind and visually impaired?

During the past century, MBSSS has provided a residential educational alternative to blind and partially sighted students in Minnesota. However, declining enrollment at the school implies that fewer students exercise this option each year. As we have described earlier, various historical events have contributed to the declining enrollment at the residential school:

- Parents of children with retrolental fibroplasia advocated that local school districts offer appropriate special education programs in lieu of sending visually impaired children to residential schools.

- Public Law 94-142 mandated that students be educated in the least restrictive environment. For visually impaired students with no concomitant handicaps, this can be accomplished in mainstream programs at the local level with direct support services provided by an itinerant or resource room teacher.

We have also found that the students currently enrolled in the school's traditional, graded program are there simply because appropriate services are not available in their local districts. This implies that students are not attending the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School because they require a residential program, rather they are placed at MBSSS because it is an easier approach for the local school district than trying to establish an appropriate program. In addition, enrollment figures indicate that almost all of the students in the graded program for the visually impaired will leave MBSSS within the next three years.

We recommend:

- The traditional, graded program at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School be formally phased out during the next three years.

This period will allow ample time for the currently enrolled high school students to graduate and for local services to be instituted for the three elementary level students presently at MBSSS. In the future, local school districts should assume responsibility for the education of visually impaired students. These students could readily be served in local mainstream programs with appropriate support services. In the event that a residential placement was indicated for a student, the state could designate certain local school districts as regional centers, and arrange foster home placements in conjunction with these educational programs. This approach would enable visually impaired students to remain closer to their own homes and families,

and would also be in keeping with the mandates of P.L. 94-142 for education in the least restrictive environment. The state must continue to ensure that students have access to services, but it no longer needs to be a service provider.

Although we advocate that the traditional graded program at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School be discontinued, the school could still serve visually impaired students from around the state in other ways. We have described MBSSS as a center for expertise and made recommendations for the school to serve as a resource for educators from around the state. In addition, MBSSS is currently the site of a four week summer session for approximately 70 visually impaired students. We recommend that this program be continued so that visually impaired students from the outstate areas have the opportunity to interact with a peer group of similarly disabled children for at least part of the year. During this time, essential skills such as braille and orientation and mobility could be strengthened. We recommend that the summer school staff also include teachers who are not employed by MBSSS during the school year. The added involvement of these teachers would provide opportunities for the exchange of ideas among educators of the visually impaired.

In 1978, educators from the state residential schools and the state Department of Education met to re-assess the mission and function of MBSSS. The declining enrollment figures at the school clearly indicated a decreased need for a residential program for the visually impaired. The school was therefore assigned the additional responsibility of educating sensory impaired, multi-handicapped children. This is a logical task for the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School to undertake for a number of reasons: the changing demographics of the school indicate a move away from visually impaired students in graded programs and towards multi-handicapped students in ungraded programs; teachers on the staff at MBSSS are trained in a variety of special education disciplines in addition to education of the visually impaired; and the forthcoming completion of the new building on the MBSSS campus will provide an architecturally barrier-free environment for educating and housing multi-handicapped students.

However, we recognize a number of potential problems in establishing MBSSS as a facility for the multi-handicapped. First, it must be determined whether there is a need in Minnesota for a residential program for the multi-handicapped. Enrollment figures for the 1983-84 school year indicate that 28 of the 39 students enrolled in the ungraded programs are at a tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade level. These students will be beyond school-age within the next three years, leaving only 11 multi-handicapped students to be served. Although a few new students may enroll at MBSSS, we think that after 1986 it is unlikely that there will be more than 20 students in attendance at a facility with a capacity for 75 children. We therefore recommend that the need for a residential school for the multi-handicapped be examined carefully.

Second, we are concerned that multi-handicapped students are likely to be segregated from their handicapped and non-handicapped peers. Multi-handicapped students need to be mainstreamed into the local Faribault schools and included in community sponsored, extra-curricular activities in order for the residential setting to remain the least restrictive environment. The problem of segregation is most evident for deaf multi-handicapped and deaf-blind students who, because of their location on the MBSSS campus, do not have opportunities to communicate with their signing, deaf counterparts on the MSD campus.

A third issue is the physical design of the new facility. With the completion of the new building, students will be housed and educated under one roof. This represents a move away from a normal environment which allows students to live and attend school in different locations.

A fourth problem which could arise in establishing the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School as a school for the multi-handicapped is that local districts might perceive that they had been relieved of their responsibility for these students. Administrators at the local level would need to be reminded that they still have the primary responsibility for establishing programs for multi-handicapped students in the least restrictive environment. Fifth, the location in Faribault of a residential facility for the multi-handicapped precludes easy access to specialized support services available in the metropolitan Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

Finally, consideration must be given to the expense involved in operating a Level 6 facility for the multi-handicapped. Many individuals with highly specialized training would be required to implement the residential and educational components of a program needed by only a few students. The state should carefully examine alternative educational settings appropriate for the multi-handicapped.

In conclusion, we have found that the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School has completed its mission as a residential school for the blind and partially sighted. The state has made a major investment in building a new facility on the Braille School campus. We expect that it will be needed to house a program for multi-handicapped students for three years. During that time, however, we think the state should carefully examine the long-range need for the program, alternate uses of the campus, and how students needing such a specialized program can best be served.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE MINNESOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

The Minnesota School for the Deaf (MSD) provides a kindergarten through twelfth grade instructional and residential program for deaf children. The curriculum is similar to that offered in Minnesota school districts, but is adapted to meet the special communication needs of hearing impaired children. The school operates under the philosophy of total communication, teaching its students through sign language, speech to the extent possible, and body and facial movements and gestures.

In our study, we asked:

- Is the Minnesota School for the Deaf capable of meeting the individual educational needs of children referred to it?
- How well does MSD educate its students? How do MSD students compare to hearing impaired students in other settings?
- What is the contemporary need for a residential school for hearing impaired students in Minnesota?

We benefited from several previous studies of the program and role of the Faribault residential schools including one sponsored by the Department of Education in 1961 and additional reviews conducted in 1977. It is significant that many of the issues that we analyzed were also discussed in the earlier reports but are still unresolved.

A. ISSUES IN EDUCATION OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED

Education of hearing impaired children involves significant challenges. First, special attention must be paid to the development of language skills. About 80 to 90 percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents. If the parents do not learn sign language or enroll their child in special pre-school programs, the child's development of communication and language skills will be slowed. In turn, a lack of language proficiency will slow the child's general educational development. Children who develop hearing impairments after birth, due to illness or accident, usually retain basic language concepts and skills and are therefore easier to teach. About 15 percent of MSD students suffered hearing losses at some time after birth.

The second challenge is to provide a socially accepting environment and peer group. Since the hearing world does not have signing skills, a deaf child looks to other deaf children for socialization. Deaf children and adults who do not have deaf peers with whom to relate can experience a very difficult isolation. Many educators believe that this problem becomes particularly acute when a deaf

child enters adolescence, a time when parent-child communication may falter and the importance of a peer group increases. A child's hearing impairment may exacerbate family communication problems.

When first established, residential schools offered deaf children their only opportunity for formal education. With the expansion of special education programs, most hearing impaired students are served in local school district programs and do not attend residential schools. Residential schools find themselves in the midst of a debate over what their mission should be. On one side are advocates of mainstream education who would restrict admission to residential schools to children who are not only deaf but significantly multihandicapped. On the other side are those who want residential schools to continue to provide a congenial social and educational environment to deaf children, where hearing impairment and sign language are the norm, and where deaf students can rise to positions of leadership and achievement.

B. INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION AT THE MINNESOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

An essential element of education of handicapped children is fashioning an education program that meets the student's individual needs. To that end, state Department of Education rules require that an Individualized Education Program (IEP) be prepared for every handicapped student. The IEP is based on periodic assessment of the student's educational needs and progress. It describes the services, including special education programs, required to meet those needs. The individualized program is developed at a conference of teachers, clinical therapists, counselors, parents, and others participating in the student's program. Parents review and approve the program and participate in conferences to discuss the student's progress.

The Minnesota School for the Deaf is a special education school in which hearing impairment is the norm. We examined the school's performance in meeting the individual education needs of its students in three areas:

1. The use of the IEP for planning individual programs.
2. Identification and consideration of additional handicaps.
3. The availability of special therapies and other services.

1. INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

We reviewed the student files of 25 MSD twelfth graders. Each student file included individualized programs from several years. We found that all IEPs look the same. The goals and performance measures for each course were always the same for every student enrolled in that course and did not reflect any consideration of individual background, skills, or needs.

In a 1983 review of the schools to determine compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, the state Department of Education cited a number of problems with individualized programs at the Minnesota School for the Deaf. The department found errors in the procedures used to develop programs, such as the absence of teachers and support personnel from the conference at which the individualized program is developed, and instances of inadequate notice to parents of conferences and review meetings. The Department of Education also cited problems with the content of the IEPs. The programs did not state measurable objectives and long term goals, nor did they include this information for special services, such as those provided by the school psychologist and counselor.

The school administration is committed to improving student IEPs and complying with the applicable regulations and has begun to take corrective measures. Teachers and residential staff participated in an in-service training session in August 1983 on preparing individual programs.

Clearly it is important for the School for the Deaf to write individualized programs correctly and to comply with special education regulations. In our view, however, a more important question is whether what goes on in the classrooms is designed to meet individual educational needs. This is particularly important because, as we see in the next section, the School for the Deaf has determined that many of its students have additional handicaps besides hearing impairment.

2. SERVING CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL HANDICAPS

As we noted in Chapter I, most singly-handicapped deaf children are being served in local school district programs. Increasingly, residential schools such as the Minnesota School for the Deaf are called upon to accept children with significant additional handicaps.

MSD administrators report that a high proportion of the school's students have additional handicaps. In an annual report to the Office of Assessment and Demographic Studies at Gallaudet College, Washington, D.C., the Minnesota School for the Deaf shows more than 40 percent of the students as having additional handicaps. As shown in Table 8, that proportion is very high as compared with other reporting units, particularly in the proportion of children with behavioral problems.

As defined by the Center, additional handicapping conditions refers to educationally significant handicaps "which place additional demands or requirements upon instructional arrangements, cause modification of teaching modes, or alter or restrict the student's activities or learning in ways additive to those occasioned by hearing loss alone."

The School for the Deaf has no written criteria for diagnosing additional handicaps such as learning disabilities or behavior problems. When MSD labels a child as having a learning disability or behavior problem, the school is relying on the subjective judgement of

a teacher or administrator. In some cases, if an MSD student is not learning at grade level, he is regarded as multi-handicapped.

We think that the School for the Deaf labels too many students as multi-handicapped. When the school views a child as having additional handicaps, that conclusion should be based on written criteria and sound assessment techniques.

We also think that the school is not providing a program that meets the individual educational needs of these students who actually have additional handicaps. There is little indication in student files and individualized programs that additional handicaps are considered in developing objectives and programs for the students. And, as we discuss in the next section, the School for the Deaf is not well equipped to meet all special needs.

TABLE 8

ADDITIONAL HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS OF MINNESOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF STUDENTS AS REPORTED TO THE OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC STUDIES, GALLAUDET COLLEGE 1981-82[a]

	MSD (N=184)	State of Minnesota (N=912)	North Central States (N=12,749)	United States (N=54,774)
Students with No Additional Handicaps	57.1%	72.5%	70.7%	69.5%
Students with One or More Additional Handicaps	42.9	27.5	29.3	30.5
Emotional or Behavioral Problems	22.3	7.2	5.7	6.1
Specific Learning Disability	6.5	5.9	7.6	7.5
Mental Retardation	5.4	7.1	7.5	8.4
Legal Blindness	1.6	0.9	1.3	1.8
Uncorrected Visual Problem	5.4	2.3	4.1	4.4
Minimal Brain Injury	0.0	0.8	1.7	2.2
Epilepsy	0.0	0.8	1.4	1.2
Orthopedic	0.5	2.1	2.8	2.6
Cerebral Palsy	2.7	1.8	3.2	3.0
Heart Disorder	3.3	1.1	1.9	2.2
Other[b]	11.4	5.4	6.1	5.8

[a]Duplicated count; some students may be reported as having more than one additional handicap.

[b]Includes diabetes.

MSD serves those deaf students who can succeed in a graded academic program. When presented with students who need special programs and a different approach, the school and the state Department of Education decided to place those students in the multi-handicapped programs on the Braille School campus rather than trying to program for those students at the School for the Deaf. For example, the physical education instructors at MSD are not qualified to teach adaptive physical education courses. Rather than train those teachers to meet the need, the school has placed children needing adaptive physical education at MBSSS. Similarly, the MSD vocational education instructors do not provide a pre-vocational program to prepare multi-handicapped students for work in a sheltered workshop or a training program for lower functioning persons. Again, those children needing a special program are placed at MBSSS where it is available.

We observed two exceptions to this practice. MSD has established a special class for four high school students who are slightly retarded and function at similar levels. MSD administrators say it is unusual to find enough children of similar age and special needs to form such a class. We noted, however, that nine deaf multi-handicapped students enrolled in an ungraded program on the Braille School campus are between 17 and 20 years of age.

In another case, the School for the Deaf provides a self-contained class for four multi-handicapped students who have little in common. The children range from six to twelve years of age. The handicaps represented include physical impairment, autism, behavioral problems, cerebral palsy, and mental retardation. The variation in signing skills makes it difficult for the students to communicate with each other, or for the teacher to conduct group lessons.

The students in this class were originally in the ungraded programs at the Braille School. The parents of one hearing impaired student requested that their child return to the School for the Deaf campus in order to benefit from the programs and peer group available there. To assemble a class of students, other parents were contacted to see if they were interested in having their children participate in a multi-handicapped program on the MSD campus. We observed this class and have serious concerns about the appropriateness of bringing children of such different ages, abilities, and needs together in one class.

3. CLINICAL THERAPIES AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

In order to meet the individual needs of students, a school needs qualified teachers and support staff. All School for the Deaf teachers are licensed in education of the hearing impaired and in elementary education or secondary subject areas. However, no MSD teachers have additional licenses in such specialities as education of the learning disabled, mentally retarded, or emotionally disturbed. While licensing does not guarantee that teachers are capable, it does ensure certain levels of additional training and experience.

Many deaf persons are capable of some expressive speech with the help of speech therapy. However, the delivery of speech therapy at the School for the Deaf has been a source of concern for many years. In 1978, the school had only one speech therapist. The school currently employs four speech therapists and engages the services of another through the Cannon Valley Special Education Cooperative. All five therapists are licensed to practice in Minnesota, which requires a bachelor's degree. None of them has received a certificate of clinical competence, which requires a master's degree and successful completion of a national examination.

While MSD has made significant improvements in expanding the availability of speech therapy, the school is still unable to provide therapy to all students as indicated in their IEPs. About 80 students will receive speech therapy in individual and group programs this year. Because MSD cannot provide speech therapy to all students needing it, the school has established a priority system to decide which students will receive speech therapy. Students are selected based on the recommendations of audiologists and teachers, the student's potential for improvement, student and parent requests, and age, with younger students receiving higher priority.

The school is also inadequately equipped to deal with students who have serious behavior problems. MSD employs a full-time psychologist who has only limited experience in behavior management techniques. The school could consult with professionals at Faribault State Hospital or elsewhere to develop behavior management plans for individual students. However, the teachers and residential aides are not trained or qualified to implement such plans. Some students have such serious behavior problems that it would be necessary to dedicate staff to work full time in implementing behavior management programs for them. Since students have more hours of direct contact with residential aides than with teachers, it is especially important to ensure that the residential staff has the skills and support to deal with these problems. School for the Deaf administrators and staff recognize the need for more support and training in this area.

During interviews with special education administrators in several districts, we heard reports of deaf students who had been mainstreamed in local district programs until junior high school. At that point, each student began to present serious behavior problems in school and at home. Placement at the School for the Deaf was suggested as the solution. In five cases that we have confirmed, the placement was unsuccessful because MSD could not deal with the behavior problem any better than the local district and the student's family. The students returned to their local districts after a few months.

In the past two years, the School for the Deaf has engaged the services of the Mental Health and Hearing Impaired program (MHHI) at St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center. MHHI staff members, including a clinical psychologist, visit the school two mornings each month to meet with teachers and residential staff and with certain students who have exhibited serious behavior problems. While this

relationship has been beneficial, limited funds and the distance between Faribault and St. Paul make it difficult for the MHHI program to work more closely with the School for the Deaf.

A number of students at MSD need occupational therapy, and their individualized programs call for them to receive it. However, the school did not employ an occupational therapist between August 1981 and August 1983. In March 1983, the state Department of Education cited the School for the Deaf for noncompliance with state special education rules because it did not provide therapy as specified in a student's IEP. The school reported difficulty in recruiting an occupational therapist, but the state Department of Education recommended that MSD contract with the Cannon Valley Special Education cooperative or Faribault State Hospital for the necessary services. In August 1983, MSD hired an occupational therapist who has begun assessments and therapy for 18 students on both campuses.

C. ADMISSION, EXIT, AND CASE MANAGEMENT

1. ADMISSION

The admission procedure for the residential schools is described in detail in administrative rules.[1] The school district of residence applies for admission on behalf of its students, after completing a formal educational assessment and concluding that the local district cannot reasonably meet the student's needs. The parents must agree that the local district cannot meet the student's needs in the least restrictive environment.

When the completed application is received, the administrator of the residential schools schedules a meeting of the admission and transfer team, which consists of one educational supervisor, one residential supervisor, one teacher, and other support staff who might be involved in this student's program. The student's parents and representatives of the school district of residence also participate in the meeting, at which the student's assessments and records are reviewed. The team concludes either that the residential schools can provide for the student's needs in the least restrictive environment and recommends admission; or that the residential schools cannot meet the student's needs in the least restrictive environment, in which case _____

[1] By statute:

> Any person who is between four and 21 years of age and who is deaf or hard of hearing shall be entitled to attend the school for the deaf if it is determined pursuant to the provisions of section 120.17 that the nature or the severity of the hearing impairment is such that education in regular or special educational classes provided for by the school district of residence cannot be achieved satisfactorily and that attendance at the school would be the least restrictive alternative for that individual. [Minn. Stat. (1982) §128A.05, Subd. 1]

the student team recommends that admission be denied. If the residential school administrator approves a recommendation to admit, then the transfer team is required to develop an IEP for that student prior to the student's entrance to the school.[2]

The process described in rule is very formal. It places burdens on local school districts and on the admission and transfer team to base decisions to admit or not on assessment data and the student's performance. Decisions are to be based on documented and careful reviews of individual student needs and the capacity of the local district and the residential schools to meet each of those needs.

In our review, we found the actual admissions process to be much more informal than that described in rule. In the files we examined, the decision of a local school district to refer a student to the School for the Deaf and the decision to admit that student were usually poorly documented. While this may reflect only a problem of documentation, we believe that local districts are not meeting the burden envisioned in the rule.

Furthermore, we found that MSD does not critically review the school district's application. In our discussions with school administrators, we were told that no student has formally been denied admission to the School for the Deaf. In a few cases, MSD told the local district that it could not effectively provide a program for the student and discouraged submitting a formal application. Since the beginning of the 1983-84 school year, we have seen some indications that the school has improved its review of applications.

Why are students referred to MSD? We think that some of the frequently cited reasons are less important than they appear. For example, a common justification for providing a state residential school for hearing impaired students is that it is impossible for small districts in sparsely populated areas to provide adequate services for so few students.

In fact, most of the students at the School for the Deaf come from districts where several students are hearing impaired and where programs are available. We compared the enrollment reports from MSD to the state special education unduplicated child count figures. Less than 40 percent (70) of MSD residential students come from districts in which there are five or fewer hearing impaired students: eight come from Region 11 (the metropolitan Minneapolis-St. Paul area), twelve come from Region 9 (south-central), and eighteen come from Region 10 (southeast). Indeed, it appears to us that school districts near Faribault rely on MSD to provide services for hearing impaired students rather than developing their own programs.

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[2]In fact, the practice at MSD has been to use the most recent IEP written by the local district for the first few months of a student's enrollment at the school. After that, MSD teachers wrote a new IEP. In the 1983-84 school year, MSD has begun to develop a diagnostic IEP for use with prospective students.

Many placements are at the parents' initiative. In some cases, the parents are genuinely convinced that their child will be better off at the School for the Deaf than in the local school district program. In other cases, placement is seen as a way of shifting responsibility for a handicapped child from the family to a third party. In general, placement is not made because the School for the Deaf provides a superior academic environment. Instead, students are sent to MSD so they can attend school in a congenial atmosphere, where their handicap is the norm.

2. CASE MANAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT

By rule, each MSD student's individualized program is to be reviewed annually to determine whether the goals and objectives are still appropriate and the extent to which they are being achieved. In addition, the school is required to conduct a formal reassessment of each student once every two years. In each case, the school is expected to fully answer the question: does placement in a residential school continue to meet this student's needs in the least restrictive environment?

We found this to be a major weakness in the school's program. First, just as we found that IEPs have little to do with individual students, the annual reviews of the individualized plan are equally unrelated. IEPs do not contain individual goals and objectives that are measurable, and there is no indication in the review report that any useful measurement of progress takes place. The report form asks: "Is this IEP still correct?" The answer is invariably "yes." The report form then asks: "Are any changes required in the IEP?" "No."

Second, we saw no evidence that the biennial reassessment is performed in a meaningful way. One role of the reassessment is to form the basis for a recommendation to transfer a student from MSD back to the home school district. However, we found no case of reassessment and subsequent transfer.

Placement at the School for the Deaf typically implies remaining at the school until a high school program is completed. Students leave the school when they graduate or when their families leave the state, or as we mentioned before, when MSD concludes that it cannot deal with the student's special needs any better than the local district. We are unaware of any case in which the school's administrators concluded that a student had achieved the objectives of residential school placement and was ready to return to a local district program.

Most local school districts that place a student at MSD have little contact with the student afterwards. With some notable exceptions, it is unusual for a representative of a local school district to attend an IEP or admissions conference, or to otherwise monitor a student's progress at MSD. Neither is there any ongoing assessment of the change in student's needs or the district's ability to serve the student.

These problems point up a significant weakness in the case management function for MSD students. At the School for the Deaf, classroom teachers serve as case managers and are responsible for coordinating the development of an IEP, organizing conferences, and serving as a contact for parents. But the case manager is not expected to regularly assess how a student's needs can best be met in the least restrictive environment.

3. MAINSTREAMING

A basic assumption underlying placement at MSD seems to be that a student placed at MSD needs a Level 6 (residential) placement but would not benefit from a combination of Level 6 and a less restrictive level of service. This combination could be achieved by enrolling students in the Faribault public schools for all or part of the school day. In our view, MSD's attitude toward mainstreaming MSD students in the Faribault public schools is ambivalent at best. As recently as 1979, no MSD students attended classes in the Faribault school district. In the current school year, ten students are enrolled for part of their program in Faribault public schools.

MSD administrators do not establish mainstreaming as an educational goal for students, nor do they actively encourage mainstreaming. In those cases where students do attend classes in the Faribault district, it is usually at the student's or parent's initiative.

Furthermore, MSD does not provide adequate support services to help its students succeed in a mainstreamed setting and to help the Faribault schools serve MSD students. A teacher employed by the Cannon Valley cooperative has some responsibility for scheduling interpreters and preparing materials. However, no one at MSD is responsible for serving as a liaison for mainstreamed students.

Successful integration of deaf children in any school setting requires careful preparation of teachers and support staff and involvement of all staff in developing the student's program. We found that MSD often did not notify teachers at Faribault Senior High School that a deaf child from the School for the Deaf was enrolled in their class and did not prepare them for special accommodations that were needed. With rare exceptions, Faribault district teachers play no role in the IEP or review processes.

MSD also needs to overcome logistical problems of scheduling classes at two sites and providing transportation between the School for the Deaf and the public schools. We found that taking a class at Faribault Senior High School sometimes meant taking two fewer courses at the School for the Deaf because travel and the overlap of class periods presented scheduling problems.

Increasing mainstreaming would require expanding the pool of interpreters. This year, a proposed mainstream placement was delayed because an interpreter was not available.

We recommend:

- Attendance in Faribault district schools should be an educational goal for all MSD students who would benefit.

In our view, improving the opportunities for MSD students to take classes in the Faribault schools is important for several reasons. First, it expands the range of courses that MSD students can take. The small size of the School for the Deaf necessarily limits the number of elective or advanced courses that it can offer. Indeed, many MSD students who do enroll in Faribault public school programs select courses that are not available at the School for the Deaf.

Second, mainstreaming increases the opportunity of MSD students to interact with non-handicapped peers. The environment at the School for the Deaf is self-contained and allows little contact with the non-handicapped world. This means that an MSD student's primary contact with non-handicapped persons is with authority figures--teachers, administrators, and houseparents--rather than with peers.

Interactions between non-handicapped and handicapped students, whether they are deaf, mentally retarded, or physically handicapped, are often difficult. The correct response to such difficulties is to address them directly and not to avoid interaction in order to avoid the problem.

A good example of how schools can address the need for interaction is the St. Paul secondary program for hearing impaired students at Highland Park Junior and Senior High School. At Highland Park, hearing impaired students are mainstreamed in regular classes and are aided by interpreters in the classrooms. (Some of the deaf students take self-contained classes in communication.) The school offers classes in signing for 25 to 30 hearing students each semester. The presence of hearing peers who can sign eases the problem of communication between deaf and hearing students, which can be significant, and makes it easier for deaf students to participate in classes and extra-curricular activities.

We recognize that some MSD students could have difficulty in a mainstream setting. Since many MSD students are performing significantly below their grade level, they might have difficulty succeeding, particularly in some academic areas. Such students may find it easier to attend classes in which language skills are less critical.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend:

- The School for the Deaf and the Department of Education should develop written criteria for admission to MSD.

Students should be accepted for admission to MSD only if the parents and local school districts are satisfied that the residential school will provide an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. In addition, MSD must show that it can offer the student education and support services which are appropriate to his

needs. Students should not be admitted to the School for the Deaf simply because they have applied or because local districts are having difficulty with them, rather because the Level 6 service offered there provides the most appropriate educational setting for them. Such written criteria might also be used by school districts and special education cooperatives who wish to provide Level 6 programs for hearing impaired students. MSD has begun writing entrance and exit criteria.

- An outside agency should play a role in the admissions and case management processes.

For example, this responsibility could be assigned to the Deaf Services Division of the Department of Public Welfare or to consultants in the Department of Education. This outside agency would be included in all meetings to determine if placement at MSD is appropriate for a student. Once the applicant is accepted for admission, this outside agency should be included in all case management meetings to determine if the student is making progress toward goals specified in the individualized plan. This agency would also be involved in subsequent decisions to retain the student at the residential school or return him to the local school district.

We recommend:

- Individualized education programs should include exit criteria and goals, and objectives based on the needs of each student.

The programs should relate student achievements to the possibility of returning to the home district and to taking classes in the Faribault district schools.

- The school should develop written criteria to diagnose and assess additional handicapping conditions.

- The School for the Deaf should establish a clear policy stating the circumstances under which it will serve students with significant additional handicaps and the programs it will provide to those students.

We think that such a policy is necessary in order to assess the future need for a state school for multi-handicapped students in the new building on the Braille School campus.

If the school does intend to serve students with significant additional handicaps, it must correct the problems that we identified and provide qualified teachers and support staff as needed to meet the needs of individual students. In strengthening its support services, the School for the Deaf should consider the use of consultants and cooperative ventures with the Braille School, Fairbault State Hospital, and the Cannon Valley Cooperative.

D. ACADEMIC PROGRAM

We wanted to know how well the School for the Deaf is able to meet some of the special challenges of educating deaf students. Teacher to student ratios at the school are low: about five students per teacher in kindergarten through eighth grade, and about seven students per teacher in the high school program. Classes are small and generally organized on the basis of age, although some of the elementary classes are organized with students of different ages but similar skills.

We observed five different classes at the School for the Deaf in September 1983. We saw talented, exciting teachers in action. However, we also saw an example of a teacher who clearly was not succeeding with a difficult class.

One measure of academic quality is whether a school and its teachers are accredited by national agencies. The Minnesota School for the Deaf is not accredited by the Conference of Educational Administrators Serving the Deaf (CEASD), although MSD administrators have identified accreditation as a goal in the current biennium. The Iowa School for the Deaf is the only residential school in the upper midwest to be accredited, and only 15 residential schools have been certified since 1975.

According to a listing in the 1983 reference issue of American Annals of the Deaf, 6 of the 53 individuals on MSD's educational staff are accredited by either CEASD or the Council on Education of the Deaf. At the Iowa School for the Deaf, 63 of 90 educational staff members are accredited by one of those bodies, while 21 of 59 at the Wisconsin School for the Deaf are accredited.

We also looked at the performance of MSD students on standardized achievement tests. Because of delays in language development, hearing impaired students often have deficiencies in basic vocabulary and reading skills. It is not unusual for them to perform several years below grade level on standardized tests. For example, MSD students complete the Stanford Achievement Test each year, using a special edition for hearing impaired students. The Stanford is a standardized test of language and mathematics skills administered in elementary and secondary schools throughout the country. It is widely used to test hearing impaired students.

We noted the April 1983 Stanford Achievement Test scores for the eleventh grade class. The average scores of the group were more than five years behind the national norms for hearing students taking the exam. The scores (expressed in grade level equivalents) in four test sections were:[3]

	Mean	Range
Vocabulary	3.5	.1 - 9.2
Math Concepts	5.8	2.0 - 10.1
Math Computation	7.5	2.9 - 10.9
Math Application	5.1	1.7 - 10.2

We reviewed the test scores of 14 eleventh graders at Highland Park secondary program for deaf students in St. Paul who took the test in November 1982. Their grade equivalent scores were only a little different:

	Mean	Range
Vocabulary	3.8	2.0 - 6.0
Math Concepts	6.1	3.1 - 9.2
Math Computation	8.1	5.0 - 11.3
Math Application	4.9	1.8 - 7.5

During April and May 1983, all eleventh graders at MSD participated in a two week vocational assessment program at St. Paul Technical-Vocational Institute, which operates a special program geared to the needs of hearing impaired students. St. Paul TVI accepts hearing impaired graduates of both residential and day school programs in several northern states. The assessment program included a series of widely used, standardized tests and observation of the students in a variety of educational and work settings.

The results on standardized tests showed consistent, significant deficiencies in basic skill areas. For example, the results of the Gates Reading Test showed that MSD eleventh graders performed at the 4.6 grade level on vocabulary and the 3.3 grade level in reading comprehension. The range of vocabulary scores was from 3.0

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[3]When the Stanford Achievement Test is administered, a student first completes a pretest to determine which of five test levels is most appropriate for that student. The results of the Stanford Achievement Test can be analyzed in several different ways. First, the grade equivalent level provides a comparison with hearing students who took the same level of the regular Stanford test. There are two other measures of achievement which allow comparison across different levels of the test. One is the scaled score, which is most useful for measuring student progress even of students of different levels of ability. The second measure is the percentile rank: a student in the 80th percentile tested higher than 80 percent of his peers of the same age. We calculated the scaled scores and percentile ranks and found those results were similar to the grade equivalents, in that the Highland Park students had higher average scores in the same three test sections.

to 8.4 grade level, and the range of comprehension scores was from 3.0 to 4.9 grade level. The results of the Wide Range Achievement Test showed MSD eleventh graders to be operating at an average 5.6 grade level in math skills. The range of results on that test was from 2.9 to 8.0.

In discussions with St. Paul TVI teachers and vocational evaluators who see graduates of day and residential schools, they said that they found little difference in the academic and independent living skills and problems of hearing impaired students from residential programs and those who attended day programs. One staff member suggested that residential school graduates sometimes display greater self-confidence than others.

In reporting these assessment results and the Stanford Achievement Test scores, we want to make it clear that we did not attempt the research needed to prove or disprove a hypothesis that residential schools provide a better educational program than day programs. We only wish to point out that there are significant problems in education of hearing impaired children, and that we found no evidence that the Minnesota School for the Deaf does a better or poorer job of educating its students and addressing those problems than comparable day school programs.

E. VOCATIONAL INSTRUCTION AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

1. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational education at MSD begins with a required sequence of courses in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Students are exposed to a number of basic skills areas in industrial arts and home economics. Students may then continue with elective courses in industrial arts, home economics, and business through twelfth grade.

However, we found that the opportunities for vocational education at the School for the Deaf are limited in several important areas. First, the variety of courses offered is narrow. In part, this is a necessary result of the small staff and student body. For example, business courses are limited to typing and use of office machines. Accounting has been offered but has not been taught because of low student interest. By comparison, students at Faribault Senior High School can choose from accounting, business law, and word processing, as well as typing and office machines.

Second, MSD has not kept pace with changes in technology. The school still teaches linotype in its graphic arts courses, even though the demand for this skill is low. The purpose of the school's vocational program is not to prepare students for jobs but to equip them with skills and experiences to build on in later training. However, the school should do this by exposing the students to courses and activities that use modern technology. The school's administration has worked on plans to introduce computerized techniques in

graphic arts and have ordered new equipment. However, the school should also pursue cooperative efforts with the Faribault Area Vocational Technical Institute and Faribault Senior High School, using their facilities, equipment, and staff.

In eleventh grade, each student is expected to complete a semester-long work study experience. Students work one fifty minute period, five days a week on the MSD campus. They work under the supervision of staff members in the kitchen and library, or with the maintenance staff.

Several years ago, the school employed a work-study coordinator who arranged placements in a number of settings, including businesses in Faribault and the state hospital. After the retirement of the person who served as coordinator, that vacancy was reassigned to the elementary department. Since that time, all work-study placements are on the MSD campus.

The school does not offer an on-the-job training program where students would be excused from a portion of the school day to work at an off-campus job. It is unusual for an MSD student to take a part-time job off campus, though we understand that a few do take summer jobs in their home towns.

Besides the work-study program, students receive little exposure to different careers and professions. For example, while the teacher of the photography class might talk to the students about how photography skills are used in jobs, it would be unusual for the students to visit a professional photographer at work or to meet with one in school.

2. FOLLOW-UP ON GRADUATES

MSD does not conduct any formal follow-up survey to find out where its graduates are in school or at work. The only information readily available in that area is from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor who works with MSD students.

Table 9 shows the post-graduation plans of graduating seniors in May 1983. More than half of the students planned to enroll at St. Paul Technical Vocational Institute, while five planned to attend college programs for hearing impaired students. The DVR office in Faribault is planning a more complete follow-up survey of students who graduated from the School for the Deaf during the past six years. We recommend that MSD's administrators cooperate with DVR in conducting a survey, and develop an ongoing system to survey its graduates at periodic intervals.

TABLE 9

POST-GRADUATION PLANS OF MINNESOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF SENIORS
May 1983

COLLEGE (5 students)	
Gallaudet College, Washington, D.C.	1
National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester, NY	2
University of California, Northridge	1
Johnson County Community College, Kansas	1
VOCATIONAL (15 students)	
St. Paul Technical Vocational Institute	15
REHABILITATION FACILITIES (2 students)	
EMPLOYMENT (3 students)	
Family farm	2
Other employment	1
OTHER (1 student)	

Source: Postgraduation plans as reported to Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Economic Security. There is no information available to indicate whether any students changed their plans.

3. INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

The School for the Deaf offers few opportunities for students to gain independent living skills. This is a crucial need in a residential school setting, where the student's needs for meals or laundry are taken care of by staff and where the students are not required to assume the responsibilities they would have in their family homes, such as yardwork or washing dishes.

Some students are exposed to courses known as Social Experiences or Independent Living Skills, where they learn skills such as shopping, using a checking account, and budgeting. However, students with strong academic skills usually do not take the courses.

In the dormitories, students are not expected to take responsibility for certain basic daily activities. For example, the residential staff makes sure that students get up on time to prepare for breakfast and classes. We think that a high school student should be expected to do that on his own. Some twelfth grade girls live in apartments in Tate Hall where they have additional privileges and responsibilities, such as waking themselves in the morning and access to a small kitchen.

Some of the students at MSD have problems of chemical abuse, sexual activity, and delinquency much like their hearing peers who live with their families. A key difference is that in a dormitory setting the school plays the role of parent and sets limits on behavior. The residential staff is sincerely concerned over what might happen to both the school and the students if an MSD student got into serious trouble with chemical abuse or sexual behavior. To avoid such possibilities, the school generally limits student responsibilities and independence.

F. THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

1. MSD AS A STATE RESOURCE

Several recommendations in this chapter are directed toward clarifying the role of the School for the Deaf in a statewide system of programs for hearing impaired students. Like the Braille School, the School for the Deaf has little interaction with local school districts. We think that MSD and local school districts need to work more closely to provide an array of services that meet the need of hearing impaired students throughout the state.

We also think that the School for the Deaf is a valuable source of expertise and specialized services in education of the hearing impaired. However, it is unusual for local districts to tap these resources. In the past, the School for the Deaf has carefully guarded its autonomy and has not reached out to school districts. Many local school districts, including some with strong special education programs, have not been interested in working with the School for the Deaf.

In the last few years, MSD's administrators have taken several positive steps toward building better ties with other educational agencies. The residential schools have joined the Cannon Valley Special Education cooperative, and have solicited advice and assistance from special educators in other districts. Advocacy groups and other organizations have participated in in-service training programs at the school.

The administrators of the School for the Deaf have suggested that the school could serve the state by establishing an assessment center. Districts who are unsure of how to serve students with hearing impairments and other sensory handicaps would send the students to Faribault where specialists would diagnose the student's educational needs and prescribe an appropriate program.

We think this possibility should be examined very carefully in order to answer certain questions. First, is an assessment center needed in Minnesota? Given the additional investment that would be required, how much demand for such a service can be expected?

Second, what is the most appropriate site for such a center? In our discussions with special educators, we heard two views. The first group felt that a single state center was appropriate, while the other felt that effective assessment must take place in the local school, involving the teachers and support staff who will implement the prescribed program. This would require a traveling team of specialists working throughout the state.

If a central site is desired, it is important that the center have easy access to the specialized medical and educational support services that it will need. There is no question that the School for the Deaf can offer good physical facilities. However, we have identified serious problems with the school's ability to assess the educational needs of prospective students and to provide support services and clinical therapies. Furthermore, specialized services needed on a consulting basis are not readily available in Faribault.

In summary, we think the idea of a statewide assessment center deserves serious study, but that the School for the Deaf may not be the most appropriate site for a center.

2. NEED FOR A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

To analyze the need for a state residential school for hearing impaired students, we first looked at enrollment trends in recent years. After several decades of steady decline, enrollment has reached a plateau of 170 to 180 students in the past five years. During the same time, the school has graduated large senior classes. There are 37 seniors this year. In 1979, 42 students were graduated from MSD.

These large graduating classes are explained partly by the movement through the schools of handicapped children born during the rubella epidemic of the 1960s. The last two groups of these students will graduate from MSD in 1984 and 1985.

During the late 1970s, the elementary enrollment dropped to under one-fourth of the total enrollment. At that time, the Department of Education considered the possibility of closing the elementary program, leaving MSD as a secondary school only. Most placements occurred in the junior high school grades, with few students beginning their elementary education at MSD. Table 10 shows that the 1984 graduating class of 37 students was a sixth grade class of eight students in 1978 and an eighth grade class of 26 students in 1980.

The number of elementary age placements has increased in the past two years although no consistent pattern has emerged. In 1982, there were nine new kindergarten students at MSD. In 1983, there was only one. It will be interesting to see whether these students complete their education at MSD or transfer to local district programs after a few years.

We expect that by 1985 enrollment at MSD will reach a new plateau of between 130 and 150 students. Although the number of new placements has increased in the last three years, that figure is

exceeded by the number of graduating seniors. The decline in enrollment is partly due to a corresponding decrease in the number of school-age children in Minnesota.[4]

As enrollment decreases, per child costs are likely to increase. The school has high fixed costs in administrative overhead and in maintenance of buildings and grounds, which will be even more underutilized than they are now. The high cost of educating a student at MSD should be considered in examining the need for the school, particularly when compared to the resources spent by local districts.

When we began this study, we expected to find many special educators and others who believe that the state does not need a residential school for hearing impaired students. Instead, these persons agreed that a residential school was needed in Minnesota. However, they also expressed some dissatisfaction with MSD's performance of that mission. Our review has shown that MSD needs to change its program and philosophy in order to takes its place in a statewide continuum of services for hearing impaired students.

TABLE 10

ENROLLMENT AT THE MINNESOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BY GRADE, 1977-1984

Grade	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84
K-1	7	7	12	11	11	19	14
2	5	4	2	5	8	3	7
3	6	5	6	6	6	10	5
4	5	7	8	9	4	6	8
5	10	11	6	7	10	5	10
6	8	12	10	8	8	14	7
7	29	14	15	15	8	12	14
8	15	30	26	22	15	8	12
9	16	16	30	28	31	18	13
10	15	17	16	29	35	29	16
11	42	14	15	17	29	34	26
12	30	42	14	17	16	27	37
Special						4	4
K-6	41	46	44	46	51	57	51
7-12	147	133	117	128	134	128	118
TOTAL	188	179	161	174	185	189	173

[4]The Education Statistics Section of the state Department of Education has projected that secondary school enrollments will continue to decrease steadily until the 1990-91 school year.

The cumulative effect of implementing the recommendations in this chapter would be a different school than the MSD of today. Clear admission criteria would mean that fewer students would be enrolled. More emphasis on achievement of measurable goals and objectives would shorten the average stay of students at the school. Those that did enroll would also spend more of their time in classes and activities outside the MSD campus. The school would have the necessary support services to meet the educational needs of students with additional significant handicaps besides hearing impairment. Districts in southern Minnesota would expand their services to hearing impaired students and would rely less on MSD.

Our recommendations are consistent with the view expressed in statute and administrative rule: the residential option should be reserved for those students who, by measurable criteria, need that level of service. Many students are admitted to the School for the Deaf not on the basis of need, but on the basis of a less stringent test: they could benefit from attending a residential school, even though local services could be provided.

The issue of who should attend a residential school for the hearing impaired has been debated for years by educators in that field. Some educators interpret the provisions of P.L. 94-142 to mean that a residential program is a very restrictive educational environment which should be used only as a last resort for children who cannot be served otherwise. Advocates of residential schools disagree and believe that residential schools should not be viewed as restrictive because they are uniquely suited to provide the special educational services and social atmosphere that hearing impaired students need.

Our report will not resolve this debate. However, we think that a clearer understanding of these issues is needed to help the Legislature decide what kind of program it wants to fund and to help the administrators of the School for the Deaf decide what students they should admit and what staff they should engage.

We understand that our recommendations might affect the unique identity of MSD, particularly as it is viewed by the deaf community in Minnesota. In its history, MSD has developed the traditions, atmosphere, and loyal alumni of a small, private boarding school. Many deaf persons have close feelings for the school, even if they never attended MSD. However, we see no reason why MSD could not continue as a focal point for many of these traditions and expressions of community.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

Visually impaired/visually handicapped: This disability area includes both blind and partially sighted persons.

Public agencies use an estimated sixteen definitions of visual impairment across the United States in determining an individual's eligibility for services. The most widely accepted definition is one issued in 1934 by the American Medical Association (AMA), which continues to be used in federal and state statutes.

The AMA defines legal blindness as follows:

> Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective glasses or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a visual field defect in which the peripheral field is contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees in the better eye.

This means that a person is legally blind if 1) with the best possible correction his better eye can see no more at a distance of 20 feet than a person with normal vision can see at a distance of 200 feet, or 2) his central visual field is so restricted that he can only see objects within a 20 degree arc, as opposed to the normally sighted individual who can see ahead, above, below and to the sides of the line of sight. "Partially sighted" would include persons who are functionally blind, but due to a lesser degree of visual impairment, e.g., individuals unable to read newspaper print even with the best possible correction.

The state Department of Education uses the AMA's definition of legal blindness but expands it with an explanation of total blindness, which includes students with or without light perception, and those who use braille for reading. Partially sighted is then defined as: a) a visual handicap which adversely affects the child's successful participation in their current educational program, b) a visual handicap verified by a medical and educational assessment, c) a visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye with best correction, or a visual field of 20 degrees or less.

The Department of Public Welfare's Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped defines blind individuals as those persons having a visual acuity of less than 20/200 in the better eye with correction, or a visual field of 20 degrees or less. Visually handicapped individuals (i.e., partially sighted) are those persons having a visual acuity of less than 20/60 but greater than 20/200 in the better eye with correction.

Hearing impaired: This disability area includes both deaf and hard of hearing persons.

There is currently no single definition of hearing impairment. The Rehabilitation Services Administration, a federal agency which funds vocational rehabilitation agencies, uses the following definitions:

> Deafness - a hearing impairment of such severity that the individual must depend primarily upon visual communication such as writing, lip-reading, manual communication and gestures.
>
> Hard of Hearing - A hearing impairment resulting in a functional loss but not to the extent that the individual must depend primarily upon visual communication.

The state Department of Education is in the process of drawing up a working definition of hearing impairment. To date, the department has defined deafness as a permanent loss which prevents the individual, with or without amplification, from hearing speech sounds or words with enough clarity to comprehend the message. A mild hearing loss is one in which the individual can use hearing with or without amplification to understand speech, and uses speech for expressive communication.

The Department of Public Welfare's Deaf Services Division employs the following definitions:

> Hearing impairment - A loss of hearing in one or both ears. Any hearing loss at any age. This term is not limited to an individual with a profound hearing loss. It covers the entire range of auditory impairment encompassing not only deaf persons but also those with a very mild loss who may understand speech without great difficulty.
>
> Deafness - Deaf persons are those who cannot hear and understand speech. For them, language reception is a visual process. Some deaf individuals may have useful residual hearing to aid in the communication process.
>
> Hard of Hearing - Those whose sense of hearing is defective in one or both ears but who can utilize hearing with or without the use of a hearing aid to understand speech.

APPENDIX B

The following rider appeared in the 1983 Education Appropriations Act:

> In the event that the Legislative Audit Commission does not approve a program evaluation of the Minnesota School for the Deaf and the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School during the first year, the commissioner of finance, in consultation with the commissioners of education and administration, shall carry out such an evaluation. The evaluation shall consider the cost-effectiveness of academic, residential, support, and administrative services in comparison to similar programs and the feasibility of alternative methods of service delivery. The study shall be submitted to the chairmen of the house appropriations and senate finance committees by January 15, 1984. [Laws 1983, Chapter 258, Section 2, Subdivision 3 (g)].

APPENDIX C

MINNESOTA SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAMS FOR SENSORY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

During the 1981-82 school year, 1,986 hearing impaired, visually handicapped, and deaf-blind students were served in special education programs in Minnesota schools. Of these, only 212 persons, or 9.4 percent of this population, attended the state residential schools. Tables 11 and 12 summarize the services available to hearing impaired and visually handicapped students who remained in local education programs. These include: 1) services offered in each county by the local school districts, and 2) joint services administered by two or more local school districts under the auspices of the Educational Cooperative Service Units, special education cooperatives, and Area Vocational Technical Institutes. We have also noted the number of hearing impaired or visually handicapped students being served within each region.

To make the tables more functional, the following information has been deleted: a) allied services such as those provided by advocate groups and administrators in the state Department of Education, and b) programs which primarily serve other disability areas, but which have multi-handicapped children who are hearing impaired or visually handicapped. In addition, because local school district and county boundaries do not always coincide, we have followed the assignment of districts to counties used by the state Department of Education's statistics section.

A. SERVICES FOR HEARING IMPAIRED AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

1. TEACHERS

There are three basic models of instruction for hearing impaired or visually handicapped students: the itinerant teacher, the resource room, and the special class.

Itinerant Teacher: An itinerant teacher of the hearing impaired or visually handicapped provides consultation and indirect service to the regular classroom teacher. Assessment, monitoring, and follow-up services are provided directly to the student who is mainstreamed in a regular education program on a full-time basis. This is an optimal model in situations where hearing impaired and visually handicapped students are able to function in regular classes but are dispersed in different school buildings throughout the region.

TABLE 11

HEARING SERVICES IN MINNESOTA DURING THE 1981-82 SCHOOL YEAR

County	Itinerant Teacher	Resource Room Teacher	Special Class Teacher	Lead Teacher or Supervisor	Interpreter	Aide	Support Staff
REGIONS 1 & 2 (35 hearing impaired students)							
*Beltrami	1	--	--	--	--	1	1
*Clearwater	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Hubbard	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
Kittson	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Lake of Woods	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Mahnomen	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Marshall	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Norman	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Pennington	1	--	--	--	--	1	1
*Polk	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Red Lake	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Roseau	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*JOINT SERVICES (includes Cass)	--	2	4	2	--	3	--
REGION 3 (61 hearing impaired students)							
*Aitkin	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Carlton	--	--	--	--	1	--	--
Cook	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Itasca	--	--	--	--	2	--	--
Koochiching	--	--	--	--	--	2	--
Lake	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*St. Louis	2	2	3	--	6	8	1
*JOINT SERVICES	2	--	1	--	6	1	--
REGION 4 (46 hearing impaired students)							
*Becker	--	--	1	--	--	1	2
*Clay	2	1	1	--	4	--	--
*Douglas	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Grant	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
*Ottertail	--	2	--	--	--	--	--
*Pope	--	--	--	--	2	--	--
*Stevens	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Traverse	--	--	--	--	2	--	--
*Wilkin	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*JOINT SERVICES (includes Big Stone)	--	1	--	1	--	1	3
REGION 5 (17 hearing impaired students)							
Cass	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Crow Wing	--	1	--	--	1	--	--
*Morrison	--	--	--	--	1	--	--
*Todd	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Wadena	--	1	--	1	1	1	--
*JOINT SERVICES	1	--	--	--	1	--	1
REGIONS 6 & 8 (184 hearing impaired students)							
*Big Stone	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
*Chippewa	1	--	1	--	--	1	--
*Cottonwood	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Jackson	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Kandiyohi	--	2	--	--	5	--	--
*Lac Qui Parle	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Lincoln	--	--	--	1	--	--	1
*Lyon	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*McLeod	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Meeker	1	1	--	--	2	--	--
*Murray	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Nobles	--	--	--	1	--	--	1
*Pipestone	--	1	--	1	1	--	2
*Redwood	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Renville	--	--	--	--	1	1	--
*Rock	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Swift	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
*Yellow Medicine	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*JOINT SERVICES (includes Wright)	2	1	2	1	3	2	3

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County	Itinerant Teacher	Resource Room Teacher	Special Class Teacher	Lead Teacher or Supervisor	Interpreter	Aide	Support Staff[a]
REGION 7 (122 hearing impaired students)							
Benton	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Chisago	1	--	--	--	1	1	--
Isanti	2	1	--	--	1	1	--
Kanabec	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
Mille Lacs	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Pine	--	--	--	--	1	--	2
Sherburne	2	1	--	--	1	--	--
Stearns	--	6	1	1	6	2	1
*Wright	2	5	2	--	6	1	--
*JOINT SERVICES (with Meeker)	see Regions 6 & 8						
REGION 9 (35 hearing impaired students)							
Blue Earth	1	--	--	--	1	--	--
Brown	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Faribault	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Le Sueur	--	--	--	--	2	--	--
Martin	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nicollet	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sibley	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
Waseca	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Watowan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*JOINT SERVICES (with Scott)	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
REGION 10 (104 hearing impaired students)							
Dodge	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Fillmore	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Freeborn	1	--	--	--	--	1	--
Goodhue	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
Houston	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mower	1	--	1	--	--	1	--
Olmsted	6	--	--	1	--	--	--
Rice[b]	3	--	--	--	3	--	1
Steele	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
Wabasha	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Winona	1	--	1	2	1	2	3
REGION 11 (725 hearing impaired students)							
*Anoka	2	9	2	--	17	2	3
*Carver	--	2	--	--	1	1	--
*Dakota	--	1	--	--	--	3	--
*Hennepin	2	4	17	5	17	17	6
*Ramsey	7	4	39	2	7	42	5
*Scott	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
*Washington	--	--	--	--	1	--	--
*JOINT SERVICES	39	6	11	8	9	24	13

Source: State Department of Education, 1981-82.

Note: These figures signify the number of positions, but do not specify the full-time equivalency.

[a]Support Staff: Includes assessment and program planning consultants, tutors for the hearing impaired, SEIMC management personnel, occupational and physical therapists, social workers, and audiologists.

[b]W. Roby Allen School for the Deaf, a private school located in Rice County, has not been included in these counts.

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TABLE 12

VISION SERVICES IN MINNESOTA DURING THE 1981-82 SCHOOL YEAR

County	Itinerant Teacher	Resource Room Teacher	Special Class Teacher	Lead Teacher or Supervisor	Braillist/ LP Typist	O & M Specialist	Aide	Support Staff
REGIONS 1 & 2 (13 visually impaired students)								
Beltrami	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3
Clearwater	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hubbard	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Kittson	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Lake of Woods	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mahnomen	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Marshall	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Norman	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Pennington	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	4
*Polk	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	--
*Red Lake	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Roseau	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*JOINT SERVICES	1	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
REGION 3 (41 visually impaired students)								
Aitkin	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Carlton	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Cook	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Itasca	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Koochiching	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Lake	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
St. Louis	3	--	--	--	2	1	2	1
REGION 4 (24 visually impaired students)								
*Becker	1	--	--	--	--	--	1	2
*Clay	2	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Douglas	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Grant	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Ottertail	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Pope	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1
*Stevens	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Traverse	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Wilkin	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*JOINT SERVICES (includes Big Stone)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3
REGION 5 (6 visually impaired students)								
Cass	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Crow Wing	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
Morrison	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Todd	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Wadena	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
REGIONS 6 & 8 (45 visually impaired students)								
*Big Stone	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Chippewa	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Cottonwood	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Jackson	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Kandiyohi	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Lac Qui Parle	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Lincoln	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Lyon	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*McLeod	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Murray	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Nobles	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
*Pipestone	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Redwood	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Renville	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Rock	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Swift	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Yellow Medicine	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*JOINT SERVICES (includes Wright)	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	4

County	Itinerant Teacher	Resource Room Teacher	Special Class Teacher	Lead Teacher or Supervisor	Braillist/ LP Typist	O & M Specialist	Aide	Support Staff[a]
REGION 7								
(33 visually impaired students)								
Benton	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Chisago	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Isanti	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Kanabec	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mille Lacs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Pine	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sherburne	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Stearns	1	--	--	--	--	--	2	--
Wright	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1
REGION 9								
(16 visually impaired students)								
Blue Earth	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Brown	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Faribault	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Le Sueur	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
Martin	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Nicollet	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sibley	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
Waseca	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Watowan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*JOINT SERVICES	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
REGION 10								
(38 visually impaired students)								
Dodge	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
Fillmore	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Freeborn	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Goodhue	2	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
Houston	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mower	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Olmsted	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Rice	2	--	--	--	1	--	--	2
Steele	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Wabasha	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Winona	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	--
REGION 11								
(202 visually impaired students)								
*Anoka	4	--	--	--	1	--	3	--
Carver	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Dakota	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
*Hennepin	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
*Ramsey	11	--	4	1	--	3	12	2
Scott	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2
*Washington	1	--	1	--	--	--	4	--
*JOINT SERVICES	14	1	2	3	17	--	--	3

Source: State Department of Education, 1981-82.

Note: These figures signify the number of positions, but do not specify the full-time equivalency.

[a]Support Staff: Includes assessment and program planning consultants, occupational therapists, tutors for the visually impaired, and SEIMC management personnel.

Resource Room Teacher: Hearing impaired and visually handicapped students are placed in a regular education program and report to a resource room to receive educational services which complement their mainstream class instruction. The resource room teacher, who is a licensed teacher of the hearing impaired or visually handicapped, is also available to the regular classroom teacher for consultation and support services.

Special Class Teacher: A teacher licensed in education of the hearing impaired or visually handicapped is assigned to a self-contained unit of students. The special class is found in more densely populated regions or administered jointly by local school districts in several counties, since it requires sufficient numbers of hearing impaired or visually handicapped students with homogeneous abilities to be brought together within a given area.

2. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR HEARING IMPAIRED AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

Lead Teachers or Supervisors: Lead teachers or supervisors are not involved in direct delivery of services to students, but act as program coordinators and liaisons for teachers in the local school districts.

Aides: The primary responsibility of the aide is the physical and behavior management of the hearing impaired student. In October 1983, under the revised rules for special education, the aide was also designated to provide incidental follow-up instruction and training under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher.

Assessment and Program Planning Consultants: These consultants are individuals or agencies with whom the schools contract to provide assessments and follow-up recommendations for hearing impaired or visually handicapped students.

Tutors: These individuals provide tutorial services directly to students who need additional help with their schoolwork.

Special Education Information/Media Center (SEIMC) Management Personnel: SEIMC personnel to disseminate special education materials and information to the hearing impaired or visually handicapped population and to other interested persons.

Occupational and Physical Therapists: Therapists are responsible for physically rehabilitating handicapped individuals.

Social Workers: Social workers are trained to deal with the emotional needs of the handicapped student.

Interpreters: Students mainstreamed into regular education classes require the services of an interpreter to translate spoken English into American Sign Language.

Audiologists: This individual is trained to identify and assess hearing impairment. The information obtained by the audiologist is used by the classroom teacher to plan an appropriate education program.

Braillist and Large Print Typist: This individual is responsible for transcribing printed materials into braille or large print, whichever is appropriate to the individual student's reading needs.

Orientation and Mobility Instructor: The licensed peripatologist is responsible for teaching visually impaired the child to familiarize himself with his environment and to move about and function within it. This area of instruction includes such skills as sighted guide techniques, self protection and the use of a cane. For younger children, spatial concepts and body awareness would also be included in orientation and mobility instruction.

3. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE'S DEAF SERVICES DIVISION AND DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

The Department of Public Welfare can provide a caseworker for counseling and case management of the hearing impaired or visually handicapped student and his family. Although this service is not a part of the local school district program, DPW may be involved in the selection of an appropriate educational placement for a child and in planning his program at the individualized education program (IEP) conference.

B. MINNESOTA EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR DEAF-BLIND STUDENTS

As of July 1983, 104 deaf-blind persons, ages 0-21, were reported to the Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. Of these, 81 attended programs in their local school districts, 9 were residents of Brainerd State Hospital, and 14 were enrolled at the state schools in Faribault.[1] Figure 9 depicts the placements of deaf-blind students, with individuals identified by county of residence.

1. LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAMS

Deaf-blind students in local school districts are educated primarily in self-contained, special education classes. These individuals receive support services, as available, from itinerant teachers of the visually impaired, speech therapists (including instruction in expressive language development), and occupational and physical therapists.

The only local school district program developed specifically for deaf-blind students is the one at the Como School in St. Paul. The Como School, like MBSSS and Brainerd State Hospital, but unlike the other school districts, receives federal funds as part of a six state regional project for the deaf-blind (Education for the Handicapped Act, Title VI-C, Deaf-Blind).

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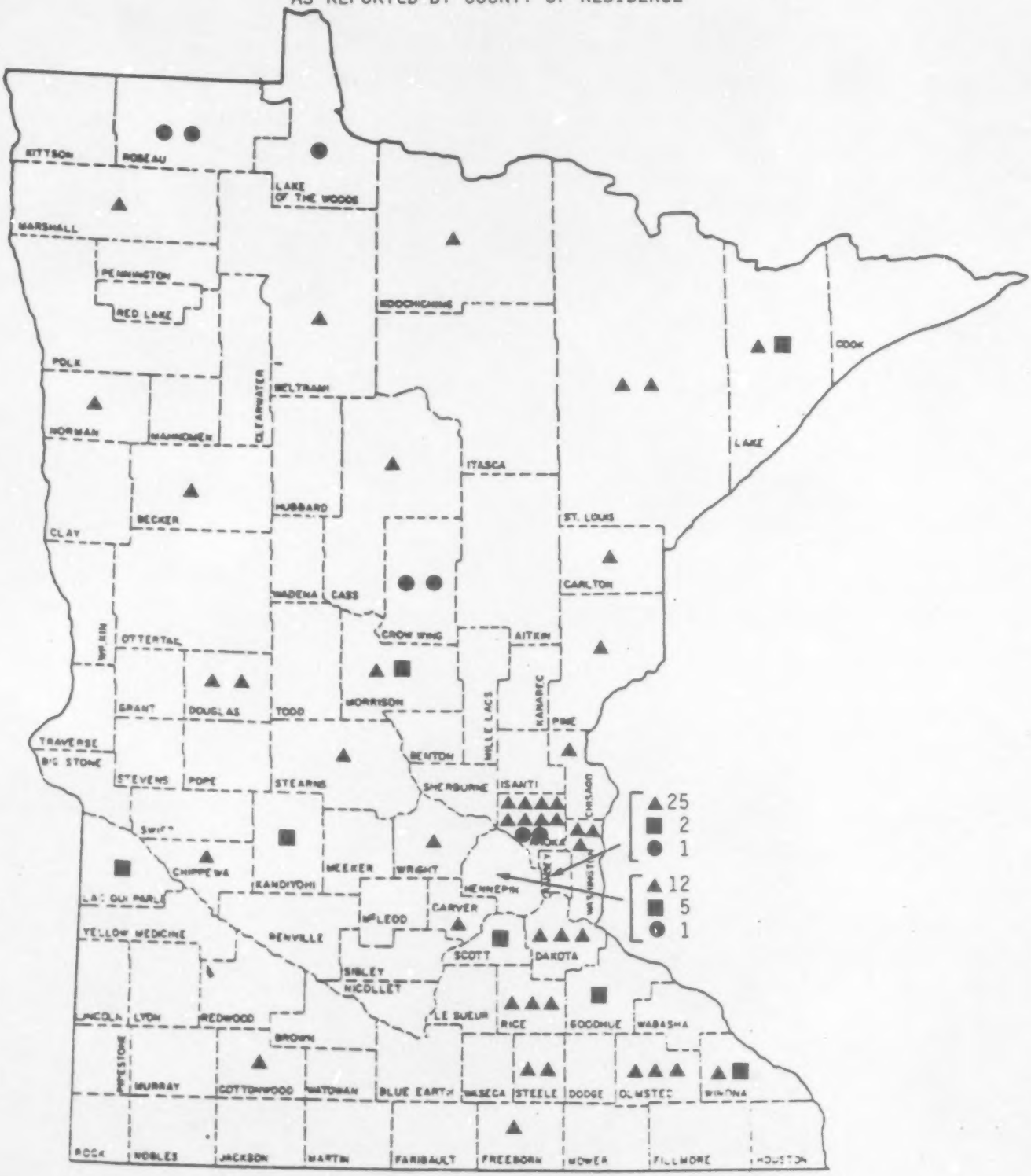
[1] Two of the students in local school district programs were from Hennepin County, but attended school in Ramsey County.

FIGURE 9

EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENTS OF DEAF-BLIND STUDENTS AGES 0-21
AS REPORTED BY COUNTY OF RESIDENCE



▲ Local School District
● Brainerd State Hospital
■ Faribault State Schools

Source: Department of Public Welfare's Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, July 1983.

Como School currently serves six deaf-blind children through its parent-infant and classroom programs. The parent-infant program for children ages 0-2, meets twice a week at the school, or once a week for homebound students. The team serving these children includes a speech clinician, an occupational and physical therapist, an audiologist, a social worker, a teacher of the visually handicapped, and a teacher of the hearing impaired. The classroom program which accepts children ages two and older offers the same support services, and also employs a teacher of the deaf-blind. Other deaf-blind students in the district are placed in classrooms for the hearing impaired or the visually impaired, depending upon which handicap is more significant, and receive support services from a teacher in the other disability.

2. THE FARIBAULT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School currently offers an ungraded educational program for eleven deaf-blind students.[2] This program has been described in Chapter II.

3. THE BRAINERD STATE HOSPITAL PROGRAM

The educational program for the deaf-blind at Brainerd State Hospital serves fourteen profoundly, dual-sensory impaired individuals from 3-25 years of age.[3] Brainerd State Hospital accepts the lowest functioning students, including those who are not well-suited to the educational program at Faribault. The program is completely self-contained with individualized curricula presented by teachers of the trainable mentally retarded, occupational, physical and recreational therapists, and behavior analysts. There are no teachers of the visually impaired, hearing impaired, or deaf-blind at Brainerd State Hospital. As is the case in some other outstate areas, this program could not attract personnel licensed in those areas of education. Instead, teachers of the mentally retarded are trained at a regional center in Michigan to enable them to work with deaf-blind students.

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[2]State Services for the Blind reports fourteen deaf-blind students enrolled at MBSSS, while the school roster for 1982-83 shows eleven such students. The three additional students are classified by MBSSS as multi-handicapped and are educated accordingly.

[3]Enrollment figures are as of July 1983. State Services for the Blind reports nine deaf-blind students enrolled at Brainerd State Hospital, while the hospital reports fourteen such individuals. This discrepancy may be explained by the following: a) SSB only reports deaf-blind persons 0-21 years, while BSH serves two individuals between 21 and 25 years of age, b) two students served by a P.L. 89-313 project are not reported by SSB, and c) one student is a ward of the state and is not shown on SSB records.

STUDIES OF THE PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

Final reports and staff papers from the following studies can be obtained from the Program Evaluation Division, 122 Veterans Service Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155, 612/296-8315.

1977

1. Regulation and Control of Human Service Facilities
2. Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
3. Federal Aids Coordination

1978

4. Unemployment Compensation
5. State Board of Investment: Investment Performance
6. Department of Revenue: Assessment/Sales Ratio Studies
7. Department of Personnel

1979

8. State-sponsored Chemical Dependency Programs
9. Minnesota's Agricultural Commodities Promotion Councils
10. Liquor Control
11. Department of Public Service
12. Department of Economic Security, Preliminary Report
13. Nursing Home Rates
14. Department of Personnel, Follow-up Study

1980

15. Board of Electricity
16. Twin Cities Metropolitan Transit Commission
17. Information Services Bureau
18. Department of Economic Security
19. Statewide Bicycle Registration Program
20. State Arts Board: Individual Artists Grants Program

1981

21. Department of Human Rights
22. Hospital Regulation
23. Department of Public Welfare's Regulation of Residential Facilities for the Mentally Ill
24. State Designer Selection Board
25. Corporate Income Tax Processing
26. Computer Support for Tax Processing

27. State-sponsored Chemical Dependency Programs, Follow-up Study
28. Construction Cost Overrun at the Minnesota Correctional Facility - Oak Park Heights
29. Individual Income Tax Processing and Auditing
30. State Office Space Management and Leasing

1982

31. Procurement Set-Asides
32. State Timber Sales
33. Department of Education Information System
34. State Purchasing
35. Fire Safety in Residential Facilities for Disabled Persons
36. State Mineral Leasing

1983

37. Direct Property Tax Relief Programs
38. Post-Secondary Vocational Education at Minnesota's Area Vocational-Technical Institutes
39. Community Residential Programs for Mentally Retarded Persons
40. State Land Acquisition and Disposal
41. The State Land Exchange Program
42. Department of Human Rights: Follow-up Study

1984

43. Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School and Minnesota School for the Deaf

In Progress

44. County Managed Tax-Forfeited Lands
45. Administration of Minnesota's Medical Assistance Program
46. Special Education
47. Sheltered Employment Programs
48. State Block Grants to Counties

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